A matter of choice

Tertiary student term time employment

An investigation of New Zealand domestic and Chinese international students

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree

of

Master of Commerce in Management

in the

University of Canterbury

by

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University of Canterbury

2011

Abstract

Term time employment of tertiary students has increased dramatically following funding policy changes in the global Higher Education sector. Taking a comparative approach, this study of students at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, investigates the decision to work during the academic term, the characteristics of such employment, and the perceived impacts on the university experiences of New Zealand domestic and Chinese international students.

The study revealed similarities and differences between the two largest student populations. Compared to their New Zealand peers, Chinese international students are less likely to take term time employment. Among those who have worked, New Zealand domestic students do so for financial reasons, while Chinese international students value the work experience in the host country. Chinese international students receive much lower wages and tend to have shorter employment durations. In terms of perceived impacts, both New Zealand domestic and Chinese international students express a generally positive attitude towards their employment decisions, with a limited but clear awareness of the negative impacts. Interestingly, for those who have never worked, Chinese international students indicate a much stronger willingness to join the student workforce in the future. New Zealand domestic students, however, are much less likely to work if they can afford not to.

This research provides empirical information about international students' term time employment in the New Zealand context. Specific advice and mentoring services are needed at both university and government levels to provide 'a more safe and supportive' employment environment, especially for international students.

Acknowledgments

It has been a long journey with love and cares, laugh and tears, losses and gains. It was my mother's *impossible* dream to be a university student forty years ago in China as one of millions of the Culture Revolution's lost generation. I grew up not only as a daughter but also a dream carrier. Today, this dream has come true. Mum, I did it!

By all the means, my husband Charles Poynton should have my biggest thanks. He is a patient language teacher, an outspoken friend, and a wonderful, untraditional husband. Nine years ago, he opened the door to a new world for me. To date, he keeps his promise. A small tree is growing. A spring is heading to the sea and the wings of my dreams are still happily flapping.

To Dr. Clare Lange, she is the most wonderful supervisor anyone could dream of. Her encouragement, guidance and support made my study a fuss-free experience. I enjoyed the coffee table chats, the handwritten recommendations and 'I am always here to help' guarantee. Most important, she provided a young research student the most academic freedom possible. It was my research and I enjoyed learning from mistakes, with a careful and watchful eye from Clare.

To all my fellow PhD and Masters students, this small international community shared plenty of laughs, rumours and earthquakes. I am proud to be one of you.

A Masters degree marks the end of one dream and the start of another journey. Thanks to all who have accompanied me.

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Introduction

The proportion of students taking employment during term time has risen sharply in recent years. This phenomenon reflects the profound changes of funding policy in higher education as well as the contemporary economic environment (Curtis, 2007). Academic investigation of this topic has been increasing, with the focus being mostly on domestic students in Western countries (Broadbridge & Swanson, 2005).

Meanwhile, the growth of international student numbers has dramatically changed tertiary student structure in most developed nations (Ward & Masgoret, 2004). Working while studying in the host country has become an essential part of the overall experience of being an international student. Given the importance, both politically and financially, of international students to many education-exporting nations, it is surprising how little academic interest has been taken in international students. It is also risky to presume that an international student employee would behave in exactly the same way as a domestic student employee.

Research Aims

This study provides some empirical knowledge of international students' term time employment in the New Zealand context. As the largest

international student population, Chinese students were chosen as subjects to compare with New Zealand domestic students.

It investigates the choices made by tertiary students about working during the academic term, the characteristics of such employment and the perceived impacts upon both employed and never-employed respondents. Based on nationality, possible similarities and differences are identified between these two major student populations. This study ensures an in-depth understanding and provides practical recommendations to benefit stakeholders.

Thesis outline

The literature review provides a summary of current academic focus on this topic and forms the theoretical foundation and guidelines for this study. Research questions, the instrument design and data collection methods are presented in the methodology section. The findings chapter comprehensively examines various results and nationality-related comparisons. The discussion section provides theoretical and managerial implications, presents the study limitations and directions for future research. Finally, a summary of the understandings obtained from the present study concludes this thesis.

Literature Review

This section provides an overview of key themes regarding tertiary student term time employment, and serves as the theoretical foundation for this research. It starts with the changes related to Western higher education funding policy. Then, the nature and characteristics of term time employment are examined. Next, the student-employee population is discussed with the focus on their motivations. A summary of perceived effects of taking term time employment is provided. Chinese literature of university student part-time employment is presented next. Then, it reviews existing studies of international students' term time employment issues. Finally it concludes with the theoretical rationale of conducting this research.

Funding policy changes in Western Higher Education sector

The major funding policy changes are associated with the question of *who should pay for the cost of Higher Education (HE)*. The answer has changed dramatically since early 1990s. According to Johnstone (2004), many developed nations considered the primary financial provider for tertiary level education should be shifted from governments (and general taxpayers) to parents and students (individual beneficiaries). Following this thinking, a set of revised HE funding policies was introduced in

many Western countries. The most common changes included introduction of tuition fees, sharply increasing the existing tuition fee levels, user charges for accommodation and food, and diminution of student grants.

Compared to the well-established belief in self-funding in the American HE sector, these financial revolutions remain a relatively new but growing trend in the European countries. Taylor and Smith (1998) call it is the *Americanisation* of the HE sector. The United States has a long history of a user pays attitude to HE (Curtis, 2007). American students and their families are well aware of the financial demands of tertiary education and are accustomed to the idea of working their way through college.

In Britain, the user-pays approach has been introduced followed by relevant HE policy changes (Moreau & Leathwood, 2006). In 1998, all grant entitlements were abolished and tuition fees of £1,000 per year were introduced. A government-based Student Loan Company started offering limited loan services for those who needed help with tuition fees and living costs (Williams, 1998). The latest HE policy change is proposed to raise the current limit on university tuition fees from £3,290 a year to £9,000 from 2012 (Coughlan, 2010).

In the UK, these funding policy changes also anticipate a parental contribution in order to meet some student financial needs.

Understandably, it is constrained by their parents' own financial status and ability to pay. Hunt, Lincoln and Walker (2004) find that students in 'newer' (i.e. post-1992) universities are more likely to come from the working or low-middle class and their parents are less likely to be able to provide sufficient financial support. Therefore students enrolled in these 'newer' universities are more likely to work during term time.

Most UK-based academic researchers consider these revised funding policies are the fundamental reason for the increase in student employment. Various studies have indicated that more students have suffered financial hardship and have been forced to seek alternative funding sources since the 1990s (i.e. Ford, Bosworth & Wilson, 1995; Humphrey *et al*., 1998). Consequently, the growth of student employment has been widely observed throughout the United Kingdom.

Similar policy changes also happened in New Zealand's Higher Education sector (Manthei & Gilmore, 2005). In 1992, the government introduced a tuition fee of $1,250 (Hawke, 1998). By 2001, the average tuition fee had risen to $4,500 per year and after a three-year freeze, it was expected tertiary institutions would increase fees up to 5 per cent per year from 2003 (2001 Student Income and Expenditure Survey, 2001). A study indicates that some New Zealand students are paying the highest tertiary fees in the world (The Impact of Student Debt on Nurses, 2003).

New Zealand domestic students can borrow from Studylink, a government-backed student loan service, to fund their education and living costs while they are studying (Studylink, 2011). According to a New Zealand University Students' Association (NZUSA) survey (2001 Student Income and Expenditure Survey, 2001), up to 80 percent of full-time students had a student loan with the average debt being $11,800 in 2001, rising to $14,242 in 2004. The latest figure from the NZUSA website reveals that the total of student loans has reached ten billion dollars (2010). These figures reveal the financial demands that New Zealand domestic students have to face.

Statistical data shows the growth of mature-aged student enrolment in public tertiary education institutions since 1990s (Data Management and Analysis Division, 2004). These older students are less likely to get any parental financial support and are more likely to face their own family responsibilities. Tuition fees would have become a significant part of their financial burden. The basic student loan is unlikely to meet the overall needs for mature students, making it essential to work while studying (Manthei & Gilmore, 2005).

To sum up, previous literature has strongly suggested the underlying relationship among HE funding policy changes, student financial pressure and the increasing number of students taking up term time employment.

The next section presents a review of the extent and nature of student term time employment.

Nature and characteristics of term time employment

Student employment is not a new concept and working during vacations (e.g. the university summer holiday) has been a traditional means for students to clear debts or build up savings (Ford *et al*., 1995). There are two major changes that have happened in recent years. First, the competition for vacation employment has become more intense. Because of increasing financial pressure while they are at university, more students are deciding to participate in temporary work. Secondly, due to the generally low wages and limited duration, the income from vacation employment is insufficient to satisfy actual financial needs. As a result, the number of students working during term time has grown steadily over the past two decades in most developed countries (Barron, 2006; Watts & Pickering, 2000).

Many studies have identified patterns of student term time employment in terms of position titles, working hours, and wage rates. Data from various surveys has indicated that the majority of undergraduates are employed in the hospitality and retailing industries. The most common

jobs include shop sales assistants, supermarket checkout operators and bar- and wait-staff (Curtis & Lucas, 2001).

The high concentration of employment within the service industries, regardless of students' academic background, is identified by most existing literature, (Broadbridge, Maxwell & Ogden, 2007; Ford *et al*., 1995; Smith & Taylor, 1997). Only a minority of students report that their part-time jobs are related to their studies at university (Hunt, *et al*., 2004). Notably, the situation is different for those who study hospitality or tourism majors. The practical element of their study makes their term time employment in hotels or catering establishments more career-oriented (Barron & Anastasiadou, 2009).

The weekly working hours for students vary with different surveys. The average length of work is between 11 to 20 hours per week (Buie, 2001; Silver & Silver, 1997; Sorensen & Winn, 1993). A minority of students report up to 30 hours per week (Taylor & Smith, 1998). Moreover, some students indicated that their working hours change from week to week, depending on variations of business demand (Lucas, 1997; Lucas & Ralston, 1997).

The typical hourly rate for term time employment is around the legal minimum wage level. This is not surprising given that the general types of jobs taken are unskilled and with a high turnover rate (Ford *et al*., 1995). Employers in service industries need cheap and flexible labour in

order to obtain reasonable profitability and students who choose to work during term time are well suited to this requirement (Curtis & Lucas, 2001). Tam and Morrison (2005) find that in China, some students value the working experience itself rather more than the actual income from working. Therefore, the wage is not the most important concern in the short term.

Interestingly, most academics have rather negative feelings about 'poor pay'. Some seriously question the financial worth of term time employment, especially when the evidence shows that students' academic performance is affected by these poorly paid jobs (Carney, McNeish & McColl, 2005).

Overall, the existing literature has thoroughly investigated the nature and characteristics of student term time employment. These papers mainly focus on domestic student populations in Western countries. Some studies have included a small number of international students in their samples; however, no specific investigation has been conducted for this student group. The reason might be due to the small percentage of international students in the study sample (Moreau & Leathwood, 2006).

Motivation for engaging in term time employment

The commonly identified motivation for working is associated with financial need (Broadbridge & Swanson, 2005; Ford *et al*., 1995; Lucas

& Ralston, 1997). There are two types of financial need, which drive students to work while studying. First, for some students, working during term time is essential to meet their daily living costs or study expenses. A study of hospitality and tourism management students in an Australian university reveals that over 90% students had worked or were actively seeking employment to cover their study costs (Barron, 2006). Controlling the level of debt (i.e. the size of student loans) is another essential factor pushing certain students into the part-time workforce (Callender & Kemp, 2000; Oakey, Oleksik & Surridge, 2003). Callender and Wilkinson (2003) find students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to face extreme financial pressure. They are thus more likely to take paid employment whilst studying.

Secondly, apart from working out of financial necessity, some students are working for 'extra cash' in order to maintain a lifestyle (Ford *et al*., 1995; Barke *et al*., 2000). These 'non-essential reasons' (Tam & Morrison, 2005) accord well with Hodgson and Spours' (2001) study. They point out that a large proportion of students feel they need work to achieve a socially acceptable living standard or to maintain expensive hobbies and holidays. Peer pressure seems to be a determining element for contemporary students engaging in term time employment, which is very different from students in 1980s and 1990s (Woodward, 2003).

Employability considerations have become another significant factor behind students' decisions to work while at university (Curtis & Lucas, 2001). Tertiary education has changed from an elite product to a mass service. More and more students realize a degree is no longer a guarantee of a brilliant career after they finish study. The need to build up an attractive Curriculum Vita through term time employment is supported by a number of studies (Harvey, Geall & Moon, 1998; Lucas & Lammont, 1998). Students perceive various part-time jobs providing them work experience, helping them to identify real career interests and enhancing practical skills. This perception is particularly obvious in a study of students majoring in hospitality and tourism management (Barron & Anastasiadou, 2009). They find those students who work part-time in hotels and travel agencies quickly establish valuable career contacts and networks within the hospitality industry. Such experience and knowledge proves very useful for their future career development. Previous studies have revealed that hospitality sector employers prefer to hire those who already have some experience prior to graduation (Ladkin, 2000; Raybould & Wilkins, 2005).

A small number of students consider that the need to extend social networks is a reason for taking term time employment. In a large-scale UK study of one thousand students from four universities, over a quarter thought their term time jobs were enjoyable and an important part of their

social life, while 5% of participants further nominated it as the main reason for working (Ford *et al*., 1995).

Overall, the motivation for working while studying is a complex issue. Academics have agreed there are many reasons behind students' decisions to combine work and study. The actual motivation for individual students may vary due to their financial status, academic major, family commitments and other relevant external issues. Nevertheless, it appears that students have a clear understanding about why they are taking term time employment and are well aware of the potential impact on their university lives. In the next section, the literature of the perceived effect of term time employment is discussed.

The perceived effects of term time employment

Broadbridge and Swanson's review paper (2005) notes a steadily growing trend in academic research into this student employment topic. Up until 2005, the literature had identified certain positive and negative effects of term time employment on students' university lives. They suggested that these effects should be analysed in terms of academic performance, social inclusion and psychological well-being.

Most studies focus on the negative impact of taking term time employment on students' academic performance (Callender & Kemp, 2000; Paton-Saltzberg & Lindsay, 1993; Robotham, 2009; Sorensen &

Winn, 1993). A significant proportion of students believe that taking part-time jobs has a negative effect on their academic work. For example, in a New Zealand study, over half of the students felt their academic work had been affected negatively (Manthei & Gilmore, 2005). However, these figures vary among studies in different countries, from as low as 30% in an Australian study (McInnis, 2001) to up to 67% in a Scottish sample (Taylor, Smith & Cooper, 1999). The negative impacts on academic performance perceived by students include poorer academic grades (Buie, 2001; Hakim, 1998), reduced time for course work (Silver & Silver, 1997; Winn & Stevenson, 1997), and missing classes and essay deadlines (Paton-Saltzberg & Lindsay, 1993; Sorensen & Winn, 1993).

The positive influence of term time employment is also reported in a number of previous studies (Lucas, 1997; Winn & Stevensen, 1997). When students' employment is closely related with their studies, the positive impact is more noticeable. A study by Tam and Morrison (2005) in a Chinese university reports over 80 % students consider their part-time jobs have positive impact on their academic work. Of respondents, about 65% work as private tutors, followed by another 14% as clerks. Private tutoring is a significant characteristic of education in East Asia (Morrison & Tang, 2002). In this Chinese study, the majority of students' term time employment is more or less related to their academic

background. This fact may explain the outstandingly high proportion of students giving a positive rating for their employment.

Interestingly, another study finds over 31% students think there is no direct link between their work and academic performance (Sorensen & Winn, 1993). Broadbridge and Swanson (2005) point out that these conflicting findings might be due to the demographic diversity of the student populations studied.

Regarding the social inclusion aspect, the existing literature also identifies a mixture of positive and negative effects. As mentioned in the motivation section, not all the students choose to work because of financial considerations (Manthei & Gilmore, 2005). Many students emphasize the benefits obtained by term time employment, such as improving communication skills, time management, teamwork development and personal confidence (Pickering & Watts, 2000). All of these enhance students' social network development, both within and outside the university environment (Lucas, 1997).

Nevertheless, previous studies reveal negative impacts, mainly associated with the sacrifice of a holistic university experience due to employment commitments (Paton-Saltzberg & Lindsay, 1993; Taylor & Smith, 1998). Students who work during term time are reported as having much less time for social activities or sporting events. Some feel they are missing an essential part of university life (Leonard, 1995).

The psychological literature has investigated the interrelationship between students' term time employment and their mental health and general well-being (Abouserie, 1994; Benjamin, 1994; Cohen, Clifton & Roberts, 2001). Most studies have concentrated on negative aspects such as stress, loneliness and fatigue related to multiple-role conflicts as a student as well as an employee (Fisher, 1994; Halamandaris & Power, 1997). A Scottish study indicates that work has a significant detrimental effect on students' mental health, especially for those who work longer hours (Carney *et al*., 2005).

More recent studies have focussed on the possible beneficial effects. These include reducing finance-based stress, extra sources of social support and self-confidence (Broadbridge & Swanson, 2005). However, given the existing evidence of generally low wages, some academics have doubted the significance of term time employment financial contributions and its impact on relieving stress(Carney *et al*., 2005).

To sum up, the existing literature has revealed understanding of student term time employment and its effects on their university lives. One outstanding characteristic is that almost all existing studies focus merely on domestic students within the home-country context (i.e. most Western, developed countries). In the next section, as one of the targeted subjects of this research, a summary of relevant literature about Chinese student employment (in China) is specifically presented.

Relevant research into Chinese students in China

Like most Western countries, Chinese HE was fully supported by the central government until the early 1990s (Mohrman, 2008). Since then, China has made a similar change to most developed nations. It has shifted from an elite service to a mass system of tertiary education.

One of the most outstanding policy changes was the reduction of financial support (Guo, 2004; Mok, 2002). Most universities lost most or all of their funding from the central government. Instead, the provincial and local governments are taking responsibility for partial financial support.

The imposition of tuition fees and their dramatic annual increases has reshaped the whole Chinese HE sector. According to the China National Bureau of Statistics (2006), annual undergraduate course fees were about $NZ1,200 to $NZ1,600 in coastal cities. These fees were a significant financial burden for most students and their families, given the annual per capita urban and rural income figures were about $NZ2,100 and $NZ650, respectively.

Furthermore, unlike most developed countries, the Chinese national student loan service remains very weak due to poor funding. Only a minority of students can get limited financial support directly from the student loan service. Bright but poor children and their families find it difficult to afford university education (Mohrman, 2008).

Despite these obvious finance-related constraints, Chinese student employment commands little academic attention in the existing literature (Tam & Morrison, 2005). The possible reasons include the following two explanations. The first is deeply connected with the traditional East Asian thinking. Most students expect their families to provide full funding during their university studies (Mok, 2002). Most Chinese parents also consider it as their parental responsibility and a long-term investment in their children. Frequently, even extended family members are willing to provide some help when needed (Yang, 2001). Unless absolutely necessary, students will not consider work as the primary financial resource for their study. Most students also worry about the potential negative impact on their academic performance, so working is not generally encouraged, especially not by their parents (Wang, 2010).

The second explanation is associated with the existing Chinese legal limitation on employment of students (Guo, 2007). Under current Chinese labour laws and regulations, a university student cannot sign any formal employment contract as a proper employee. It means, for those who do take certain part-time jobs, their legal rights are outside of the protection of labour law. This unsatisfactory situation further discourages students from seeking part-time employment.

Nevertheless, the number of university students taking part-time employment has steadily increased in China (He, 2007). In one survey

conducted in four major Chinese cities, from 19% up to 28% of university students reported they had some experience of part-time employment. Notably, they are mainly working in the summer school holidays. Far fewer students choose to extend their work to the normal term time.

The primary motivation for working is very different from the finance-driven reasons for most domestic students in Western society. A study conducted in Beijing reveals over 71% of students who decided to work briefly did so in order to gain some actual working experience. Only 19% of them worked because of financial pressure. A minority (5%) reported they had worked due to specific academic requirements or peer pressure (He, 2007).

Compared to Western students, the choice of employment yields another interesting difference. For Chinese students in China, being a private tutor is the most common part-time job. Other jobs include retail promotion sales personnel, commercial poster distributors, and research assistants (Jing, Wu & Zhao, 2005; Tam & Morrison, 2005).

Due to the difficulties in accessing the latest Chinese academic databases from New Zealand, there is limited availability of more detailed research information. Therefore it is not possible to review Chinese university student term time employment more specifically. Nevertheless, this

information indicates there are some significant differences between the East and the West on the topic of student employment.

The increasing growth of international student enrolment has been observed in most Western universities. China has become one of the most important source countries of foreign students (Gürüz, 2008). Despite the expansion of the international student population, there is no research that specifically investigates international students' term time employment. This is a surprising oversight by academia. However, some studies have touched on the international student population in a limited manner, for example, by recruiting students as research participants, regardless of nationality. In the final section, a review of international student term time employment is examined.

International students and term time employment

A few previous studies have briefly touched upon the international student group in their target sample population (Barron & Anastasiadou, 2009; Ford *et al*., 1995; Lee & Rice, 2007; Moreau & Leathwood, 2006). However, due to various academic resource or sample limitations, the international student population has not yet been specifically studied.

Observing the increasing student population diversity in the UK, Barron and Anastasiadou (2009) investigate the differences of term time employment by students' nationality. Their findings indicate that Eastern

European (particularly Polish) students are more likely to work and then work longer hours, compared to other student groups. Indian students are less likely to combine study and employment, especially in the case of new arrivals. Overall, almost 50% of students currently hold or have held part-time jobs whilst at the university, regardless of nationality.

For international students, there are usually some immigration and working restrictions imposed by the host-country government. For example, the permissible weekly workload is about 21 hours in the UK. In New Zealand, up to 20 hours per week is allowed during term time and there is no limitation on hours during the school holidays (Immigration New Zealand, 2006). These restrictions directly affect international students employment possibilities (Barron & Anastasiadou, 2009). Similar working hours requirements are enforced in the United States with an additional limitation of on-campus jobs only for international students (Lee & Rice, 2007). Some employers may refuse or be unable to employ international students due to these specific legal employment restrictions for international students.

Interestingly, some studies find that international students are not necessary totally disadvantaged because of their foreign origins. Ford *et al.* (1995) reveal some international students work as translators for small companies whose business is related with their home countries. They are

also more likely to be employed by employers who come from the same country.

In another UK based study, Moreau and Leathwood (2006) indicate that 19% of their participants are international students by nationality and overall more than 30% are Asian by ethnicity. They notice that the complexities of individual family histories and current situations would affect directly students' perceptions of term time employment. It is difficult to slot certain students (i.e. new immigrants) into the traditional social class categories and further to identify the level of financial stress. Therefore, they did not continue their investigation of the international student population due to the inaccuracy of the data obtained.

In conclusion, the literature review section has provided a foundation and a rationale for conducting this research. Current literature has mainly focussed on the term time employment of Western domestic students, with very little knowledge obtained regarding international student employment while at university. The present research aims to go some way towards addressing this gap in the literature. The detailed methodology of this study is outlined in the following chapter.

Methodology

This section clarifies the scope of this research and the research questions. Then it presents the methods used to generate essential data to investigate the possible similarities and differences between New Zealand domestic students and Chinese international students, regarding term time employment. It will cover the context of the research, the research questions, outlining the instrument design, the conduct of a pilot study, procedures for recruiting participants and research ethical issues.

Research context

The following concepts and definitions used for this research are explained for clarification purposes:-

Student term time employment refers to employment of students enrolled full-time in tertiary level institutions and having part-time (or full-time) employment during the formal academic term. In the existing literature, some studies use other expressions like *student part-time employment*, *paid employment* or *employment during term time* to express the same concept. These terms are used interchangeably by many academics and in the previous literature review section. The traditional situation of students taking part-time or full time employment during their vacation is excluded from the scope of this research.

New Zealand domestic student refers to an individual who is a New Zealand citizen and is currently enrolled in a New Zealand university as a full time student. The student has the benefits of domestic tuition fees and the student loan service. The abbreviation 'NZDS' is used in following sections.

Chinese international student refers to an individual who holds a passport from the People's Republic of China, including Hong Kong and Macau. The student holds a valid international student visa and is currently enrolled in a New Zealand university as a full time student. The student has to pay international tuition fees and is subject to legal restrictions (i.e. limited rights to work while in New Zealand). The abbreviation 'CIS' is used in following sections.

Some Chinese students hold a Permanent Resident (PR) visa from New Zealand Immigration. These students, like domestic students, are eligible for domestic tuition fees and student loans. There is no legal impediment to seeking employment while studying. Therefore, Chinese students with PR status form a special student category, in that they are neither typical domestic nor international students. Given the time and resource limitations of a Masters project, this study opted to exclude this particular group. It focused on Chinese students who had to pay international student tuition fees.

There were no other personal limitations upon participation in this study regarding age, gender, religion, marital status or current employment status. Both employed and never-employed students were suitable subjects for this research.

Research questions

Present literature has well established an assessment pattern of Western student term time employment. It generally includes students' choices (the proportion of working and not working), the reason for those choices, the characteristics of student employment, and the perceived impact of those decisions. In this study, using NZDS and CIS as the comparison pairs, the following research questions were proposed:

1. What proportion of NZDS and CIS respondents choose to take term time employment?
2. For the *Employed* subgroup, what are the similarities and differences between NZDS and CIS respondents in terms of motivation, job search methods, the nature of the employment and perceived impacts?
3. For the *Never-Employed* subgroup, what are the similarities and differences between NZDS and CIS respondents in terms of their reasons and perceived impacts?

Instrument design

Based on a detailed literature review of higher education student part-time employment, a self-reporting online survey was developed. It included three versions of questionnaires with respect to student employment status at the survey time. They were:

(a) For those currently working;

(b) For those who used to work but were no longer working; and

(c) For those who have never worked during academic term time.

The questionnaire for groups (a) and (b) were nearly identical with two small variations. The first was in the questionnaire for group (b); all questions were phrased in the past tense for those who used to work but were not at the time of the survey. Secondly, of necessity, the wording changed in the question regarding the intention to continue working in the coming semester. It was reframed as ‘the intention of return to work in the coming semester’. Apart from the above changes, the questionnaire for all ‘employed’ respondents contained all the same closed questions. In order to understand the extent of student perceptions on term time employment, a 7-point scale was used to measure the perceived positive and negative impacts of working whilst study. Spaces were provided where necessary for individual respondents to add their own comments and ideas.

The questionnaire for groups (a) and (b) contained five sections, which elicited the following information:-

1. Demographic information: including age, gender, nationality, region, dependents, study-related debt (i.e. student loan) and employment status;
2. Employment information: including job title, weekly working hours, hourly rate, perceived satisfaction with pay, service duration for the current or previous employer, job search methods, principal reason for working, and the intention to continue working (or return to work) in the coming semester;
3. Perceived positive and negative impacts of taking term time employment: including two statements to measure the overall positive and negative impact on the university experience; seven positive impact statements from working; and eleven negative impact statements due to work. These proposal statements were generated from the literature review and assessed with a 7-point scale;
4. Academic workload information, including the student's major, year of study, weekly study workload, Grade Point Average (GPA) and perceived academic performance; and
5. Personal comments about the student term time employment issue.

The questionnaire for group (c) was much shorter as it omitted the employment information section, which was not applicable. It contained four sections, which recorded the following information:-

1. Demographic information: including age, gender, nationality, region, dependents, study-related debt (i.e. student loan);
2. Reasons for not working and the perceived impact on the university experience, including the eleven proposal statements generated from the literature review and a statement to measure the overall impact upon the student university experience (on a 7-point scale);
3. Academic workload information: including major, year of study, weekly study workload, GPA and perceived academic performance; and
4. Personal comments about the student term time employment issue.

Given the difference in parental control between New Zealanders and Chinese (Chao, 1994), two specific options relating to parental influence were added to the possible choice of reasons. ‘My parents do not want me to work’ and ‘my parents do not allow me to work’ were added to the other nine common reasons generated from the literature review.

Pilot study

Prior to formal data collection, 15 students (including both undergraduate and postgraduate, NZDS and CIS) from the Department of Management were invited to participate in a pilot study of the survey. The main purpose was to check whether or not the proposed research instruments (i.e. the information sheet and three versions of questionnaires) worked in the desired way. Appropriate adjustments were made after the pilot study.

There were five main checking points: -

1. Whether the individual question was expressed clearly;
2. Whether the whole questionnaire flowed in a logical way;
3. Whether respondents could complete the questionnaire in the proposed time (i.e. 10-15 minutes);
4. Whether the online survey site worked properly; and
5. Whether the data entered could be successfully exported into SPSS software for analysis.

The main modification was associated with the expression of questions. In response to feedback, a misleading question regarding the potential negative impact of not working was deleted from the original questionnaire. Ambiguous questions were reworded to minimise potential

misunderstandings, especially for those proposal statements for measuring the perceived impacts of taking employment.

Another important decision was made to use only English questionnaires for both NZDS and CIS respondents. The original questionnaire was translated into simplified and traditional Chinese for CIS respondents. In the pilot study, Chinese students reported that it was not a problem understanding all the survey questions in English. It was considered that would be more consistent if all respondents were using the same questionnaire. Therefore, at the formal data collection stage, only the revised English versions were used.

The pilot study confirmed that other concerns were not an issue. The overall questionnaire flowed logically. For both online and hardcopy, it was not a problem to complete it in time. Following the given survey link, students could easily log on to the Qualtric website and access the appropriate questionnaire. The data recording function worked properly and trial data could be exported an Excel or SPSS file as desired.

After the pilot study and subsequent modifications, the data collection stage started. The details of how the survey was conducted are reported in the next section.

Procedure

Survey site

This study was carried out at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand. The survey was placed on the www.qualtric.com website. Qualtric is a professional online survey service provider, offering hosting services to all researchers in the University of Canterbury. All enrolled students could access this website easily, either from the university or off-campus.

Participant recruitment

The Department of Management distributed an invitation to participate via the departmental email. It was sent to all students currently enrolled in any management course within the department. As a result, the survey was circulated to a broad cross-section of the management student population.

To encourage participation, five gift vouchers (each worth $50) were provided as an inducement. At the beginning of the survey, respondents could provide their student ID number to enter the draw.

An interesting phenomenon was observed during the data collection stage. NZDS responded warmly to the email and in the first week, about 200 NZDS completed the survey. However, the response rate was much lower from the CIS group. In the end, 361 NZDS and 31 CIS respondents completed the questionnaire online.

The difficulty of recruiting enough CIS was noticed during the early stages of the online questionnaire. The low response rate remained a problem even after a reminder email was sent out. After a month of web-based data collection, only 30% of the target number of CIS (i.e. 31 respondents) was acquired.

As suggested by 'Methods and data analysis for cross-cultural research' (van de Vijver & Leung, 1997), people from a non-Western culture (e.g. Asian) sometimes react differently towards common Western research methods. It explained the situation in this study and why the online survey method received a very low response rate from CIS.

An alternative method was considered and then used. Hardcopy questionnaires were prepared and distributed in the central library and various lecture halls, specifically targeting Chinese international students. Oral introductions were used to obtain students' basic information and an indication of their willingness to participate. Their employment status was asked before distributing the appropriate questionnaire to the respondent. Then the participant would be left alone in a quiet and private space to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire was then returned to the researcher after an agreed time, normally about 30 minutes. Usually the data collection started between 4 and 5pm. The rationale for this timing was that most students would be involved in self-study and be more likely to have some time to spare.

This method was proved very successful. Most Chinese students were happy to help and completed the questionnaires. All hardcopy data were then transferred into the online survey database. After two weeks of the hardcopy distribution method, 80 CIS respondents had completed the questionnaires.

To sum up, at the end of data collection, 363 NZDS and 101 CIS respondents completed questionnaires by either Qualtric online surveys or by the hardcopy distribution method.

Timeline of recruitment

The data collection lasted for eight weeks. After the pilot study and necessary revision progress, the online survey started in the middle of June and continued until the end of July of 2010. Hardcopy distribution to CIS was conducted from the 20th of July to the 5th of August.

Ethical considerations

This study was conducted within New Zealand context and involved participants from two nationalities with very different cultural backgrounds (Holmes, 2004). As required by the Human Ethics Committee at the University of Canterbury, any research involving human participants must meet all the appropriate guidelines for ethical principles and cultural values, and abide with the Treaty of Waitangi.

Throughout the whole research progress, cultural sensitivity and suitable care was taken to comply with the ethical requirements.

All participants were fully informed regarding this research and relevant participant rights through the initial invitation to participate via email. A written information sheet was placed ahead of the questionnaire on the survey website and in the hardcopy. All respondents were assured of their right to withdraw and the right to refuse to give answers to any particular question. Furthermore, direct data entry via the online survey site guaranteed respondents of confidentiality, anonymity and non-traceability (Tam & Morrison, 2005).

More consideration was paid to research ethics in recruiting CIS participants for the hardcopy questionnaires. A brief oral introduction was mainly to ask potential respondents whether they would like to participate in the study. An apology was offered immediately if students did not want to participate. Due to the face-to-face distribution method, extra care was taken to ensure respondents completed the questionnaires in a private, quiet, and relaxed environment. All hardcopy data were carefully secured from general public access.

Conclusions

Based on the extensive literature review, three questionnaires were carefully designed, differentiated by student employment status.

The questionnaires were revised in response to feedback from a pilot study. All NZDS and 30% of CIS responses were generated by an online survey. Due to a poor response rate by CIS participants to the on-line survey, face-to-face hardcopy questionnaire distribution was introduced later to acquire more CIS respondents. There were ultimately over 400 respondents, a statistically sufficient sample (Byrne, 2002). The following section outlines the detailed analysis of the data collected.

Findings

This section presents the analysis of data collected through the research questionnaires. Systematic data preparation was conducted prior to data analysis. The overview of the valid responses and their composition is outlined. The data examination is divided into 'Employed' and 'Never-Employed' subsections with detailed analysis of descriptions and independent sample test results. The section concludes with a summary of similarities and differences between NZDS and CIS with respect to term time employment.

Data preparation

As suggested by Longford (2005), most surveys rely on respondents' cooperation. For any research, full response from all the participants is ideal but unattainable in reality. After eight weeks of data collection, a total of 462 questionnaires were returned from the online survey database and hard copy distribution. Prior to data analysis, these raw data were examined for missing values, unreasonable outliers and straight-line answers. As a result, 342 valid questionnaires were selected, 249 were NZDS and 93 were CIS.

Valid data were generated through the following four steps. First, questionnaires with essential values missing were deleted. Specifically, this refers to those with a whole section of questions left blank. It did not

mean that all incomplete questionnaires were removed. The information sheet stated that respondents had the right to answer or not answer certain questions. Unless an individual respondent missed too many questions and could not provide any meaningful information, the response was recorded and kept in the data pool.

Next, based on common knowledge, answers that were unreasonable outliners were deleted. It was mainly associated with the amount of student's loan: some respondents reported their study debt as little as $129 or as much as $700,000. These figures were obviously mistakes and the relevant responses were omitted.

Questionnaires that had straight-line answers were deleted from the database. In the scaled question section, there were reversed items in places to measure respondents' comprehension. If a respondent answered all questions with single scale, such as all disagreed, agreed or neutral, their responses were excluded because they did not provide real understanding.

At the end, the raw data was divided into four subgroups, by respondents' employment status (i.e. Employed or Never-employed) and nationality (i.e. New Zealander or Chinese). Originally, employment status was divided into three categories: *currently working, used to work*, and *have never worked*. However, after data collection, it was very difficult to generate statistically adequate numbers for each subgroup, especially for

CIS respondents. As mentioned previously in the methodology section, the questionnaires used for both *currently working* and *used to work* were almost identical, apart from tense and necessary wording adjustments. Therefore, combining the *currently working* and *used to work* subgroups into an '*employed*' group was a logically sound data management step.

The subgroups definitions and abbreviations were listed as following:

- ***Employed-NZDS*** refers to the subgroup of NZDS respondents currently working or who had worked during the academic term.
- ***Employed-CIS*** refers to the subgroup of CIS respondents currently working or who had worked during the academic term.
- ***Never-Employed-NZDS*** refers to the subgroup of NZDS respondents who had never worked during the academic term.
- ***Never-Employed-CIS*** refers to the subgroup of CIS respondents who had never worked during the academic term.

Analysis procedure

As the first step of data analysis, descriptive analysis was conducted. It quantitatively describes the main features of the collection of data (Rodeghier, 1996). These results include frequency, means, median and distribution of NZDS and CIS respondents' demographic information, employment characteristics and academic background. The descriptive

analysis procedure provides a summary view of the student term time employment by students' nationalities (i.e. New Zealander vs. Chinese).

For the *employed* subgroups, it presents respondents' demographic information (i.e. gender, age, year of study, dependent responsibility and study related debt), employment pattern (i.e. the frequency of job search methods and future employment intentions, the mean weekly working hours, hourly rate and service duration, and perceived impacts of working) and academic background (i.e. major, self-judged academic performance).

For the *never-employed* subgroups, the same analysis was repeated on these respondents' demographic information and academic background. The focus was then on the reasons for not working and the perceived impact on their university experience. Mean scores and percentages were calculated for rating purposes.

Next, independent-samples *t* tests were conducted. The *t* test result determines whether two population means are equal based on the results from two independent samples (Rodeghier, 1996). Between NZDS and CIS, *t* tests revealed the extent of potential similarities and differences with respect to student term time employment. All results had a significance level of 0.05.

The findings are presented as following: the summary of all respondents by nationality, the results of *employed* subgroups and the results of *never-employed* subgroups.

Data overview

A total of 342 valid respondents were generated from the raw data. 249 were NZDS and 93 were CIS. Table 1 shows the demographic summary of all respondents, by nationality.

Table 1 Respondent overview by nationality

Demographic details		**NZDS (N=249)**	**CIS (N=93)**
Gender	Male	46.2% (115)	41.9% (39)
	Female	53.8% (134)	58.1% (54)
Age	Range	18-56y	18-39y
	Mean	21.2y	22.0y
Dependents	Yes	3.6%	1.1%
	No	96.4%	98.9%
Student loan	Yes	83.5%	0%
	Mean	$14786.2	Nil
	No loan	16.5%	100%
Year of study	First year	31.5% (78)	37.6% (35)
	Second year	31% (77)	28% (26)
	Third year	25.4% (63)	22.6% (21)
	Others	12.1% (31)	11.8% (11)
Academic background (Majors)	Commerce	85%	63%
	Others	15%	37%

Of the 249 NZDS respondents, 46.2% were males and 53.8% were females. Their ages ranged from 18-56 years with a mean of 21.2 years. 94.9% were under 25 years old. There were 9 respondents who had one or more dependents (i.e. young children) to support while they were

studying at university. The large majority (83.5%) of respondents had student loans ranging from $1,000 up to $70,000 with a mean of $14,786.

NZDS respondents reported a wide range of faculties and study stages in their academic background. 85% were enrolled in various commerce related majors (i.e. accounting, strategic management, human resource management, marketing, economic, finance and management science majors). The remainder included engineering, computer science, law, history, mass communication, political science, psychology, chemistry, and other University of Canterbury courses.

For NZDS respondents, the overwhelming majority were studying towards an undergraduate degree. 31.5% of respondents were in their first year, 31% were in second year, and 25.4% were in third year. The remaining 12.1% were in either postgraduate or foundation studies (Some fourth-year respondents enrolled in four-year undergraduate programmes were also counted in the 'other' category).

Of the 93 CIS respondents, 41.9% were males and 58.1% were females. Their ages ranged from 18 to 39 years with a mean of 22 years. 90.3% were under 25 years old. There was only one respondent (female, 39 years old, PhD candidate) who had a young child to support. No CIS respondents reported receiving student loans, which are for NZDS only. 88.2% of CIS respondents came from Mainland China, the rest were from the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

CIS respondents also reported a wide range of faculties and study stages in their academic background. 63% were enrolled in various commerce related majors (i.e. accounting, strategic management, human resource management, marketing, economic, finance and management science majors). The rest were enrolled in majors including engineering, computer science, law, statistics, film production, biological science, psychology, and foundation courses.

Similarly to the NZDS, most CIS respondents (87.9%) were studying towards an undergraduate degree. 31.5% respondents were in their first year, 31% were in second year, 25.4% were in third year. The remaining 12.1% were in either postgraduate or foundation studies. Figure 1 shows the percentages of study years for both NZDS and CIS respondents.

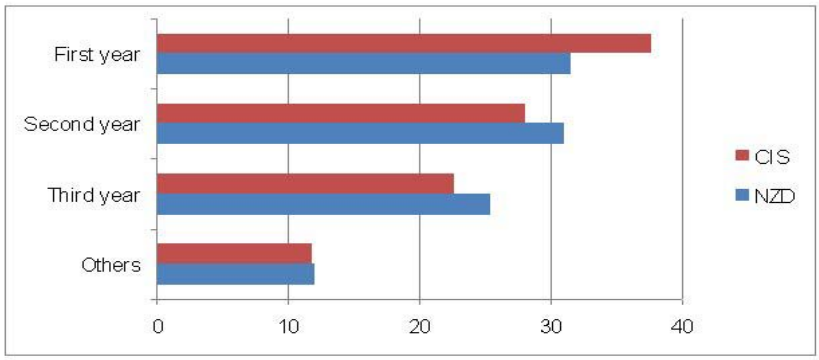

Figure 1 Year of study: NZDS vs. CIS

Between NZDS and CIS, the choice of working or not revealed the most significant divide. As Figure 2 shows, a greater proportion of NZDS respondents were working or had worked during their time at university.

Compared to their CIS peers, NZDS were more likely to take term-time employment while studying at university.

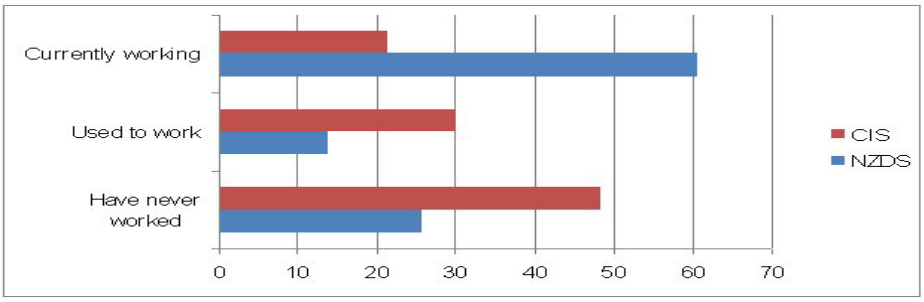

Figure 2 Employment status: NZDS vs. CIS

Up to the time of this survey, 74.3% of NZDS had some employment experience during academic term time: 60.6% were currently working and 13.7% used to work. The remaining 25.7% of the NZDS respondents had never worked during academic term time.

By comparison, 51.6% of CIS had some employment experience during academic term time: 21.5% were currently working and 30.1% had worked in the past. The remaining 48.4% of CIS respondents had never worked during academic term time.

Overall, between NZDS and CIS respondents, there was no significant difference in terms of gender, average age, responsibility for dependents and year of study. The obvious difference was the study-related funding support (i.e. Student loan service). Most NZDS borrowed from the government agency to support their study. As required by New Zealand

immigration policy, international students must provide evidence of adequate funding in order to be granted an international student visa.

Employment status data revealed that there would be major differences between NZDS and CIS with student term time employment. The following sections reported the detailed findings about *Employed* and *Never-employed* subgroups.

Findings about Employed subgroups

The findings are presented in the following order: the characteristics of respondents who chose to work, the primary reasons for working, job search methods, the characteristics of their employment, the perceived positive and negative impacts of working, self-judged academic performance, and intention of continuing or returning to work in the coming semester. Nationality-based similarities and differences are reported in individual sections.

Characteristics of Employed respondents

As Table 2 shows, of 185 Employed-NZDS respondents, 41.1% were male and 58.9% were female. It appeared that more female than male students were working or used to work during academic term time. Their age ranged from 18 to 56 years with a mean of 21.5 years. A minority of respondents in this subgroup (3.8%) had one or more dependents to support while they were studying in the university. The vast majority of

Employed-NZDS respondents (85.4%) had a student loan, which ranged from $1,290 to $70,000 with a mean of $15,119. It meant that most employed respondents had direct financial support from the government student loans agency.

Table 2 Employed respondents overview by nationality

Demographic details		Employed-NZDS (N=185)	Employed-CIS (N=48)
Gender	Male	41.1%	35.4%
	Female	58.9%	64.6%
Age	Range	18-56y	18-29y
	Mean	21.5y	22.3y
Dependents	Yes	3.8%	0%
	No	96.2%	100%
Student loan	Yes	85.4%	0%
	Mean	$15,119	Nil
	No loan	14.6%	100%

Of the 48 Employed-CIS respondents, 35.4% were male and 64.6% were female. Similarly to their NZDS peers, there were more female respondents than male with employment experience during term time. Their ages ranged from 18 to 29 years with a mean of 22.3 years. None of the Employed-CIS respondents had dependents to support. As mentioned previously, student loans exist as a funding service only for domestic students. Therefore, none of the Employed-CIS respondents had any financial support from the New Zealand government.

Between Employed-NZDS and Employed-CIS respondents, *t* test results showed that there were no significant differences of means in terms of age (p=0.10) or gender distribution (p=0.48). There were statistically significant differences with the respect of dependent responsibility (p=0.008) and study-related debt, i.e. student loans (p=0.00).

Primary reason for working

As suggested by previous studies, students had a variety of reasons for taking employment while studying. Figure 3 shows the various reasons for working for Employed-NZDS and -CIS respondents.

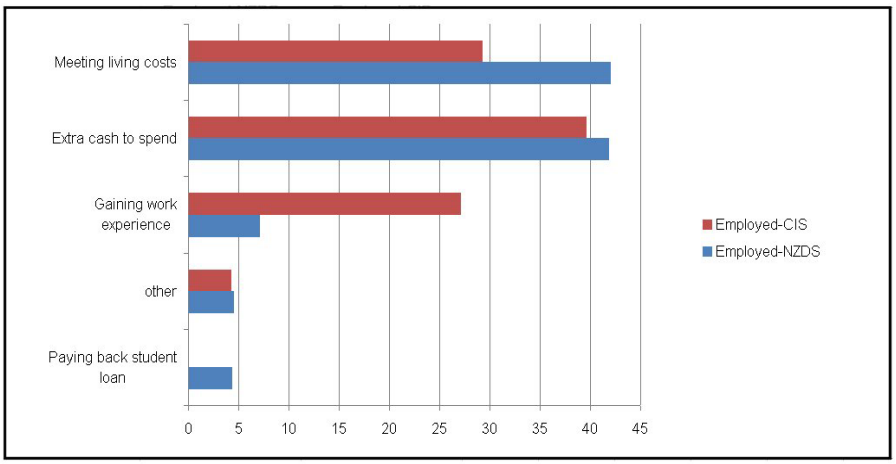

Figure 3 Reasons for working: NZDS vs. CIS

Of the Employed-NZDS respondents, the primary reasons given for working were 'meeting living costs' (42%) and 'extra cash to spend' (41.8%). Both were directly finance-driven, one was for essential expenses and the other was associated with non-essential spending. A minority (7%) chose 'gain work experience', while 4.3% of respondents

listed ‘paying back student loan’ as their main reason to work. 1.5% of respondents worked to save money. For Employed-NZDS, finance-related reasons were much more frequently reported than any other.

Of the Employed-CIS respondents, the primary reason for working was also associated with financial concerns. ‘Extra cash to spend’ was rated as the highest reason, with 39.6% agreeing with it. ‘Meeting living costs’ was scored by 29.2% of respondents as their primary reason for working. The third rationale, ‘gaining work experience’ had 27.1% support. This figure was nearly four times that of the Employed-NZDS respondents (7.1%). It indicated that many Employed-CIS respondents valued the working experience. The remaining 4.2% of respondents thought taking a term-time job could bring them some life experience while they were living in a foreign country.

Overall, finance-related reasons were the most powerful driver behind both Employed-NZDS and -CIS respondents. With both NZDS and CIS, there were similar percentages of respondents working for non-essential financial reasons (41.8% vs. 39.6%). Meanwhile, compared to their Employed-CIS peers, NZDS had a much higher proportion of respondents working to meet their daily living costs (42% vs. 29.2%), but valued the work experience much lower (7.1% vs. 27.1%).

Job Search methods

Based on the literature review, the five most commonly used job search methods were listed in the questionnaires used for the research. Respondents were asked which methods they used to get their current or previous job. The 'other' category was listed as an option for those who used additional methods. Figure 4 shows the result for job search methods used by Employed-NZDS and CIS respondents.

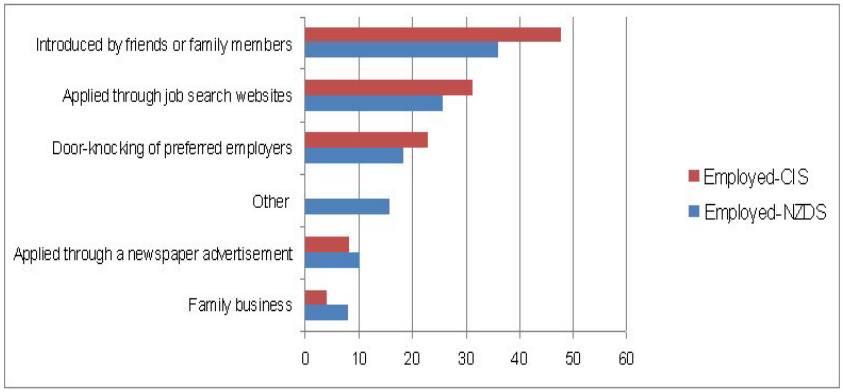

Figure 4 Job search methods: NZDS vs. CIS

Widely varying job search methods were used by Employed-NZDS respondents. 14.6% indicated that they used more than one method in order to get employment. The most popular methods were 'introduced by friends or family members' (36.2%), 'applied through job search website' (25.9%) and 'door knocking of preferred employers' (18.4%). About 11% of respondents found their employment through newspaper advertisements. A minority (8.1%) indicated that they worked for family-owned businesses.

Additionally, 15.7% of Employed-NZDS respondents put their job search methods in the 'other' category. 'Approached by employers' was mentioned by a number of respondents. 'Through a previous job' appeared as a quite common way to link to the current job. A few respondents mentioned a university employment agency (i.e. UC Employment office and Student Job Search office). It suggested work-related social networking played an important role for some NZDS respondents' job search campaign.

Employed-CIS respondents used similar methods to find jobs. Around 15% tried more than one way. The top three most common job search methods were 'introduced by friends or family members' (47.9%), 'applied through job search website' (31.3%) and 'door-knocking of preferred employers' (22.9%). A minority of Employed-CIS respondents (8.3%) found their part-time job through a newspaper advertisement. 4.2% reported they worked for their family business. These figures indicated a strong similarity between Employed-NZDS and –CIS respondents with job search methods.

Interestingly, no Employed-CIS respondent used 'other' methods to get work. This suggested that the five listed methods were those Employed-CIS respondents actually used to find jobs. Unlike their Employed-NZDS peers, work-based social relationships or networking was not a common avenue to employment opportunities for CIS.

To sum up, Employed- NZDS and -CIS respondents took a substantially similar approach to finding jobs. Friend or family-related social networking had the highest score for both nations' students. The difference was that Employed-NZDS respondents had many more 'other' channels to get a job, especially through previous work or workplace social networking.

Employment type

Figure 5 shows the employment type of all *employed* respondents. It reveals the variety of jobs taken by Employed-NZDS and -CIS during academic term time.

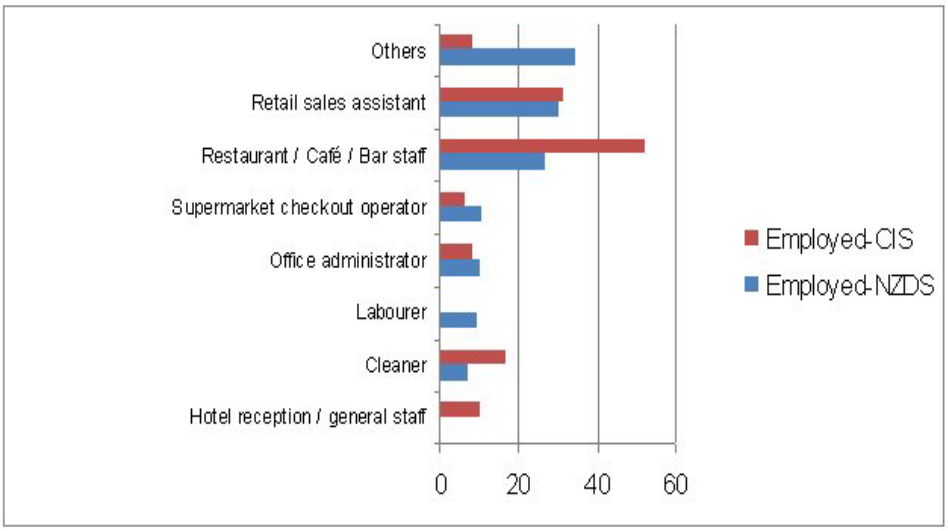

Figure 5 Employment type: NZDS vs. CIS

Employed-NZDS respondents reported a wide range of jobs for their term-time employment. 30.3% worked as retail sales assistants, followed by 26.5% in various restaurants, café or bars. A similar proportion of

respondents reported working as supermarket checkout operators (10.8%), office administrators (10.3%), or labourers (9.7%). A minority of respondents (7%) took cleaning jobs. As reported in previous literature, these jobs were the most common student employment.

The most outstanding feature of the Employed-NZDS subgroup was a substantial proportion (34.6%) putting their employment in the 'other' category. These 'other' jobs included nanny, coach, event organizer, designer, marketer, call centre personnel, contractor, tutor, furniture maker, security personnel, research assistant, university residential advisor, international freight forwarder and self-employed in business. The variety of occupations reported by Employed-NZDS respondents indicated that NZDS had a broad choice of employment.

Almost 30% of Employed-NZDS respondents held more than one job simultaneously while they were studying. This was found in some previous studies as well, showing that some university students had several part-time jobs (Lucas & Ralston, 1997).

Employed-CIS respondents had a narrower variety of employment. 52.1% of respondents reported working in restaurants, cafés or bars. Another 31.3% were working in the retail sector as sales assistants. 'Cleaner' was the third most common job for 16.7% of Employed-CIS respondents. The rest were working in hotels (10.4%), offices (8.3%) and as supermarket checkout operators (6.3%). There were no Employed-CIS

respondents working as labourers. A minority (8.3%) indicated their employment the ‘other’ category, including a nanny, a storeman and two were self-employed.

33.4% of Employed-CIS respondents said they held more than one job simultaneously while studying in the university. There was a similar proportion in the Employed-NZDS subgroup. It indicates that taking more than one part-time job is quite common among university students.

To sum up, there was a strong similarity regarding student jobs between Employed-NZDS and -CIS respondents. The majority were working in either retailing or the hospitality sector. The main difference was the variety of work. Apart from common service-related jobs, at least for some of the Employed-NZDS respondents, their job titles made a long list of interesting occupations. On the contrary, Employed-CIS respondents did not have such a wide choice.

Weekly working hours

Figure 6 shows the average weekly working hours by both Employed-NZDS and CIS respondents. It indicates that most students are working a reasonable length of time during the week.

Of the Employed-NZDS respondents, the mean weekly working hours were 13.2. It ranged from 1 to 50 hours, with a median of 12. The majority of respondents (69.2%) worked less than 15 hours per week. A

few respondents reported lengthy work hours: at the extreme, there were two working 48 and 50 hours per week respectively.

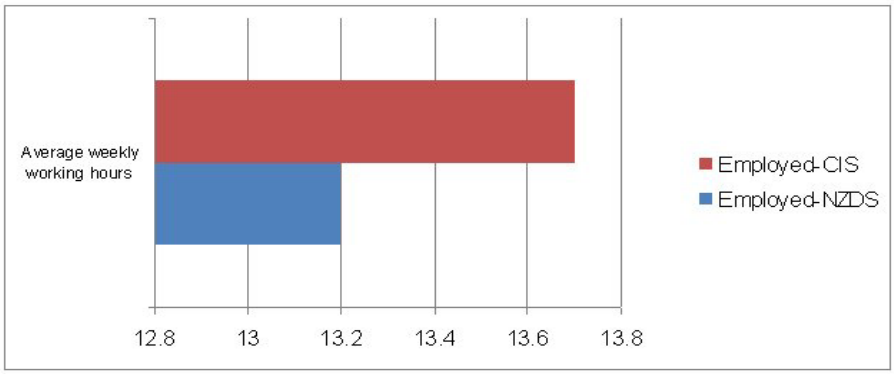

Figure 6 Weekly working hours: NZDS vs. CIS

Of the Employed-CIS respondents, the mean number of working hours per week was 13.7. It ranged from 3 to 32 hours, with the median being 14. As required by the immigration regulations for international students, 93.8% were working within the legal limit. The remaining 6.2% were working in excess of the legal hours.

Overall, both Employed-NZDS and -CIS respondents worked a moderate amount, with a minority having exceptionally long hours. The *t* test showed no significant difference in the means of the weekly working hours of NZDS and CIS ($p = 0.69$).

Wages and perceived fairness of pay

Respondents were asked about their wages and satisfaction with their pay. About half of NZDS respondents skipped these pay-related questions. As a result, only 96 of the 185 Employed-NZDS and all 48 Employed-CIS

respondents answered pay-related questions. The following findings were generated from the available data. Figure 7 shows the mean wages for Employed-NZDS and CIS respondents.

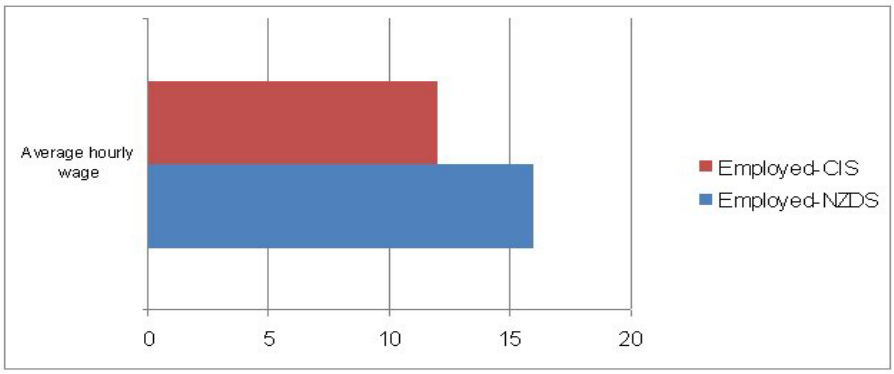

Figure 7 Average hourly wages: NZDS vs. CIS

Of the 96 Employed-NZDS respondents, the average rate was $16, which is 28% above the current New Zealand legal minimum wage (i.e. $12.50 per hour). The rate ranged from $10 to $75, with the median being $14. The majority of respondents (89.1%) received a rate between $13 and $23 per hour. This was understandable given most of them worked in the retail or hospitality industry. 6.5% of respondents reported they were working for less than the minimum wage. 4.4% of respondents had a much higher hourly wage, ranging from $30 up to $75. The highest rate was for a male, middle age respondent. He explained as following: 'I had my own consultancy business, which was quite successful. I decided to go back university to complete a management degree two years ago. It was not a problem for me to study and continue running my business at

the same time. $75 was an estimate number based on my last year's annual turnover.'

Of 48 Employed-CIS respondents, the average hourly rate was $12.00, which was 4% lower than the current minimum wage. The rate ranged from $4 to $17.50, with the median being $12.50. A large proportion of the respondents (41.7%) reported working for less than the legal minimum wage. No Employed-CIS respondent reported an outstandingly high wage. As mentioned earlier, Employed-CIS respondents mainly worked in the restaurant or retail sectors, where pay is usually low.

Figure 8 shows the perceived fairness of pay for both Employed-NZDS and CIS respondents. Among those who provided wage information, most Employed-NZDS respondents had positive feelings about what they received. 41.7% felt their pay was fair and another 44.8% thought it was satisfactory because everyone got similar pay. Only 7% of respondents felt their wages were too low but they had to accept it or lose their jobs.

Employed-CIS respondents indicated much lower satisfaction with their wages. Only 22.9% thought their pay was fair, followed by more than half (54.2%) of respondents saying 'ok, everyone gets the same'. 22.9% revealed their dissatisfaction with pay, accepting it to keep the job.

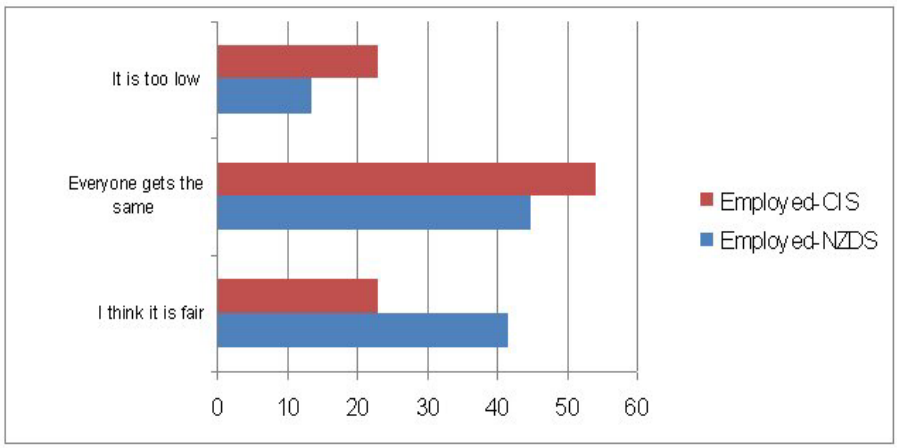

Figure 8 Perceived fairness of the pay: NZDS vs. CIS

Generally speaking, Employed-NZDS respondents had much better pay compared to their Employed-CIS peers. By nationality, the *t* test showed there was a statistically significant difference in the mean hourly rate ($p = 0.00$). The perceived satisfaction with pay was also statistically significantly different ($p = 0.02$). It suggested Employed-NZDS respondents were much happier about their pay than CIS.

Service duration for the latest employer

Figure 9 shows the average service duration for both Employed-NZDS and CIS respondents for their current or latest employer. Of the 185 Employed-NZDS respondents, the average service duration with the current or most recent employer was 25.6 months. It ranged from 1 month to 15 years. A good proportion of Employed-NZDS respondents (20%) had worked for the same employer for more than 40 months. This longer employment indicated a stable relationship among Employed-

NZDS respondents. It also indicated that many respondents had already been working before enrolling at the university and decided to continue working.

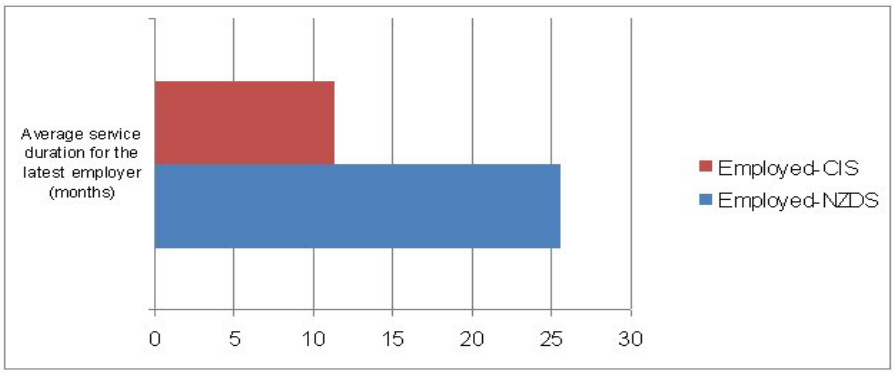

Figure 9 Average service duration: NZDS vs. CIS

Of the 48 Employed-CIS respondents, the average service duration with the current or previous employer was 11.3 months, ranging from 1 month to 48 months. 45.8% worked for the same employer for less than 6 months. Only 18.7% had more than 24 months service duration.

The *t* test indicated that there was a significant difference in mean service duration between the NZDS and CIS 'Employed' subgroups (p= 0.00). Compared to their Employed-NZDS peers, on average, Employed-CIS respondents had a much shorter work history with the one employer.

Perceived positive impacts of taking term-time employment

Based on the literature review, the questionnaires listed seven most common positive impacts of term-time employment, plus an overview measurement on university experience. Respondents were asked to

indicate their perceptions by 7-point scale with 1 as ‘strongly disagree’ to 7 as ‘strongly agree’. To simplify the data interpretation, the percentages of strongly agree and agree were added together and interpreted as the proportion of respondents supporting such impacts as benefits. Similarly, the percentage of strongly disagree and disagree were added together and interpreted as the proportion that those did not recognize any positive impacts. Detailed figures, including percentages of perception and relevant *t* test results (the p value) are listed individually below.

Overall positive impact on university experience

As Table 3 shows, only 25.4% of Employed-NZDS respondents thought taking term-time employment had an overall positive impact on their university experience. A minority of respondents (7.5%) felt working during academic term time was not beneficial at all. A large proportion of respondents (67%) had no strong feelings about their decision to work while studying.

Table 3 Overall positive impact on university experience

	Strongly agree and agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree and disagree
Employed-NZDS (N=185)	25.4	25.9	24.3	16.8	7.5
Employed-CIS (N=48)	62.5	18.8	2.1	10.4	6.3

Surprisingly, Employed-CIS respondents had a much stronger belief in the overall positive impact of term time employment. 62.5% agreed or strongly agreed that a part time job provided certain benefits for their general university experience. Only a minority (6.3%) disagreed and did not think working had any overall positive impact on their university life. The remaining 31.2% of Employed-CIS lacked strong positive feelings about the general benefits to their university experience.

A *t* test revealed a significant difference in the means of the overall positive impact between Employed-NZDS and -CIS respondents ($\rho = 0.00$). With respect to university experience, CIS considered term time employment was much more beneficial than their NZDS peers.

In decreasing order, based on Employed-NZDS subgroup data, detailed results of individual positive items are reported below.

Improved financial status

As Table 4 shows, 'improved financial status' received the highest support of all proposed positive impacts from Employed-NZDS respondents. 85.4% considered it as an outstanding benefit. Only 1.1% did not think their employment brought any financial improvement. This result was echoed with the reported primary reasons from the Employed-NZDS subgroup. Most of them were working for financial reasons, either for essential or non-essential expenses.

Table 4 Improved financial status

	Strongly agree and agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree and disagree
Employed-NZDS (N=185)	85.4	9.7	3.2	0.5	1.1
Employed-CIS (N=48)	58.4	18.8	10.4	8.3	4.2

For Employed-CIS respondents, it was the third most positive impact of working. 58.4% agreed that taking a part-time job was helpful for their finances. 4.2% did not think their financial status was improved by the income from their employment.

A *t* test revealed there was a significant difference in the means of the positive impact on financial improvement between Employed-NZDS and -CIS respondents ($p = 0.00$). Far more Employed-NZDS than -CIS respondents considered that the term time employment improved their financial situation.

Improve interpersonal skills

As Table 5 shows, for Employed-NZDS respondents, ‘improve interpersonal skills’ was rated as the second highest benefit of working. 59.8% considered the employment experience helped them to improve their communication with others. Only one respondent (0.5%) disagreed

and did not think his interpersonal skills were improved through his part-time employment.

Table 5 Improve interpersonal skills

	Strongly agree and agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree and disagree
Employed-NZDS (N=185)	59.8	24.5	12.5	2.7	0.5
Employed-CIS (N=48)	66.7	20.8	8.3	0	4.2

Similarly, Employed-CIS respondents rated it as the second most positive impact from the term time employment. 66.7% of Employed-CIS believed their jobs helped them to improve their knowledge or skills about how to communicate with others. 4.2% did not think their interpersonal skills were improved by their employment experiences. In New Zealand, most working environments require communication in English. Therefore, working would provide additional language practice and wider social communication opportunities for foreigners, i.e. CIS.

Enhance future employability

As Table 6 shows, for Employed-NZDS, enhancing employability was considered as the third most positive outcome from term-time employment. 57.9% agreed that working experience during university study would help to secure future employment. Again, very few

respondents (2.7%) did not think an extended work history would make them more employable later.

Table 6 Enhance future employability

	Strongly agree and agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree and disagree
Employed-NZDS (N=185)	57.9	24	10.4	4.9	2.7
Employed-CIS (N=48)	56.3	25	6.3	8.3	4.2

Employed-CIS respondents rated it as the fourth most positive impact. Like their NZDS peers, a similar proportion (56.3%) believed their current work record would be useful for seeking future employment. A further 25% checked ‘somewhat agree’ and felt the positive impact was limited. 4.2% strongly disagreed that there was any specific benefit.

Gain job experience

As Table 7 shows, ‘gain job experience’ was rated as the fourth most positive impact by 52.4% of Employed-NZDS respondents. On the contrary, 4.3% disagreed and felt their current or previous work did not provide any job experience. 28.1% chose ‘somewhat agree’ with limited support of such a claim. It indicated a perceived gap between ‘actual work experience’ and ‘the desired work experience’.

Table 7 Gain job experience

	Strongly agree and agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree and disagree
Employed-NZDS (N=185)	52.4	28.1	8.6	6.5	4.3
Employed-CIS (N=48)	73.8	10.4	8.3	6.3	6.3

For Employed-CIS respondents, 'gain job experience' was the most important positive impact. 73.8% either agreed or strongly agreed with the value of working experience from their term time employment. Only 6.3% of Employed-CIS did not consider their current work was useful for gaining on-the-job experience.

Increase confidence in the real workplace

As Table 8 shows, Employed-NZDS respondents rated 'increase confidence in the real workplace' as the fifth most positive impact. 50% thought term-time employment made them more confident in a real work environment. A minority of 2.7% disagreed with it. 26.6% somewhat agreed. It indicated that a majority felt their confidence increased in varying amounts through real employment experience.

For Employed-CIS respondents, 56.3% agreed that real work helped them feel more confident. 4.2% disagreed and did not see it as positive impact. A further 22.9% somewhat agreed about such benefits. Generally

speaking, Employed-NZDS and CIS expressed very similar opinions on this issue.

Table 8 Increase confidence in the real workplace

	Strongly agree and agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree and disagree
Employed-NZDS (N=185)	50	26.6	15.8	4.9	2.7
Employed-CIS (N=48)	56.3	22.9	14.6	2.1	4.2

Improve time management ability

As Table 9 shows, 'improve time management ability' was supported by 41.9% of Employed-NZDS respondents. According to the given definition of term time employment, students had to combine their study and work at the same time. To achieve a desirable balance, students need to carefully manage their time between academic workload and their employment commitments. A further 26.5% of Employed-NZDS respondents "somewhat agreed". However, 4.3% did not see any direct link between their employment and ability to manage time.

Employed-CIS respondents reported a very similar attitude towards the proposed benefit of improving time management ability. 39.6% agreed or strongly agreed with this positive impact. Another 29.2% "somewhat

agreed", while 8.3% did not think their term time employment had any direct influence on developing time management skills.

Table 9 Improve time management ability

	Strongly agree and agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree and disagree
Employed-NZDS (N=185)	41.9	26.6	16.3	10.9	4.3
Employed-CIS (N=48)	39.6	29.2	12.5	10.4	8.3

Helps to identify future employment interest

As Table 10 shows, Employed-NZDS respondents rated 'helps to identify future employment interest' lowest among all seven possible positive impacts. 33.5% indicated taking part-time work could be helpful to identify their future career development. 15.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed on this particular impact. It had the lowest percentage support of all positive impacts.

Table 10 Helps to identify future employment interest

	Strongly agree and agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree and disagree
Employed-NZDS (N=185)	33.5	19.5	21.1	10.3	15.7
Employed-CIS (N=48)	23	25	18.8	18.8	14.6

It also received the lowest support from Employed-CIS respondents. Only 23% thought their current work would be useful for their future career development. Another 25% thought it might be true in some way. 14.6% strongly disagreed and 18.8% somewhat disagreed with this proposed benefit.

Most students were working at occupations with very little or nothing in common with their academic background. For both Employed-NZDS and CIS respondents, their current employment would not be what they would seek after completing their degrees. Therefore, this particular positive impact on future employment had only modest support.

To sum up, five out of seven individual proposed positive impacts were agreed with by over 50% of the Employed-NZDS respondents, with 'improve financial status' strongly supported by most of Employed-NZDS respondents. However, despite high percentages on these individual positive impacts, Employed-NZDS reported a low score on 'overall positive impact on university experience'. It indicated that the majority of Employed-NZDS respondents considered that working was something they had to do out of financial necessity.

Employed-CIS respondents also rated five out of seven proposed positive impacts with over 50% support. In contrast to their NZDS peers, the highest was 'gain job experience' which indicated that CIS valued the experience itself more than the financial benefit from their working.

Another outstanding difference was that Employed-CIS rated the overall positive impact on their university experience much more than the Employed-NZDS subgroup. The majority of Employed-CIS considered taking some work was a positive decision and improved their general university life.

Negative impacts of taking term-time employment

Based on the literature review, nine proposed negative impacts were listed in the questionnaire to investigate the downside of term-time employment. A summary question was asked at the end about the extent to which students considered taking term-time employment had negative impact on their overall 'university experience'. The percentage of *strongly agree* and *agree* were added together and interpreted as the proportion of respondents considered these negative impacts as a result of taking employment. The percentage of strongly disagree and disagree were added together and interpreted as the proportion of respondents who did not think their employment had these specific negative impacts.

Overall negative impact on university experience

For both Employed-NZDS and CIS respondents, none of the nine proposed negative impacts had over 50% of support, although it revealed that all employed respondents were well aware that they existed. However, the extent of damage was considered controllable or bearable.

The feeling of ‘it was not that bad at all’ was echoed by the score of ‘overall negative impact on university experience’.

Table 11 Overall negative impact on university experience

	Strongly agree and agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree and disagree
Employed-NZDS (N=185)	4.8	16.2	20.5	13.5	44.9
Employed-CIS (N=48)	8.4	8.3	12.5	14.6	56.3

As Table 11 shows, only 4.8% of Employed-NZDS and 8.4% of Employed-CIS respondents strongly agreed that term-time employment affected their overall university life negatively. 44.9% of Employed-NZDS and 56.3% of Employed-CIS respondents strongly disagreed that their university experiences were affected by the decision to work.

In decreasing order, based on Employed-NZDS subgroup data, detailed results of individual negative items are reported below.

Schedule conflicts between working and other activities

As Table 12 shows, for Employed-NZDS respondents, ‘schedule conflicts between working and other activities’ was the most negative impact of all. 36.4% strongly agreed that they sometimes had schedule conflicts. Another 31.5% chose ‘somewhat agree’ and further identified working in term time would be inconvenient sometimes in planning other activities.

Table 12 Schedule conflicts between working and other activities

	Strongly agree and agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree and disagree
Employed-NZDS (N=185)	36.4	31.5	10.3	10.9	10.9
Employed-CIS (N=48)	37.5	25	14.6	4.2	18.8

Employed-CIS respondents also held a similar attitude regarding the schedule conflicts between their employment and other plans. It received the highest score with 37.5% 'agree or strongly agree' while another 25% chose 'somewhat agree'.

Feel stressed out due to my work

As Table 13 shows, Employed-NZDS respondents selected 'feel stressed out due to my work' as the second most negative impact caused by term time employment. 24.3% said they suffered stress because they had to work. Interestingly, at the same time, a similar proportion of Employed-NZDS respondents (28.1%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this proposal.

Employed-CIS respondents rated it as the fourth most negative impact. A small proportion (20.9%) agreed they were stressed out due to combining study and work. Similarly to their NZDS peers, 27.1% of Employed-CIS

respondents did not think their working commitment actually caused a higher stress level.

Table 13 Feel stressed out due to my work

	Strongly agree and agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree and disagree
Employed-NZDS (N=185)	24.3	22.2	13.5	11.9	28.1
Employed-CIS (N=48)	20.9	18.8	22.9	10.4	27.1

Do not have enough time for socializing with my family or friends

As Table 14 shows, it was the third most common negative impact obtained from the Employed-NZDS respondents. 21.2% agreed they did not have enough time to spend with their family or friends. However, 24.4% felt it was not an issue. They did not think working actually affected the amount of time they spent with family or friends.

Table 14 Not enough time for socializing with family or friends

	Strongly agree and agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree and disagree
Employed-NZDS (N=185)	21.2	19	20.1	15.2	24.4
Employed-CIS (N=48)	23	20.8	12.5	8.3	35.4

Employed-CIS respondents also chose ‘do not have enough time for socializing with my family or friends’ as the third most negative impact. 23% agreed that they couldn’t spend as much time as they wanted with family or friends because of their work. A far greater proportion of Employed-CIS respondents (35.4%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this proposal. For international students, this may be a reflection of a lack of family and friends in Christchurch.

Affected academic grades

As shown in Table 15, ‘affected academic grades’ was considered as the fourth negative impact for Employed-NZDS respondents. 16.8% of respondents agreed their employment had directly affected their academic results. 19.5% did not think their academic performance was affected by their employment. Notably, 27% chose ‘neither agree nor disagree’ about the potential negative effect of working on academic results.

Table 15 Affected academic grades

	Strongly agree and agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree and disagree
Employed-NZDS (N=185)	16.8	23.2	27	13.5	19.5
Employed-CIS (N=48)	18.8	22.9	12.5	20.8	25

Employed-CIS respondents expressed a very similar opinion relating to their academic performance. Only 18.8% thought they could get better academic grades without working. Another 22.9% 'somewhat agreed' that their term time employment had affected their study results. However, 25% disagreed and another 20.8% 'somewhat disagreed' that there was an adverse link between their work and academic results.

Cannot get enough rest

As shown in Table 16, Employed-NZDS respondents placed it fifth as negative impact. 14.8% considered working during term time caused them to not get enough rest and another 20.8% 'somewhat agreed'. However, 38.3% disagreed with this proposal and another 10.9% 'somewhat disagreed'. It suggested that only a minority of respondents had insufficient rest because of their employment workload.

Table 16 Cannot get enough rest

	Strongly agree and agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree and disagree
Employed-NZDS (N=185)	14.8	20.8	15.3	10.9	38.3
Employed-CIS (N=48)	27.1	14.6	14.6	12.5	31.3

For Employed-CIS respondents, lack of rest was the second most negative impact caused by their employment. 27.1% strongly agreed with

it and another 14.6% ‘somewhat agreed’. It might be explained by their actual work, as over half of Employed-CIS respondents were working in restaurants or cafés, which usually require long hours and late night shifts. However, 31.3% were reported it was not an issue for them and disagreed with the statement.

Do not have enough time for study

As Table 17 shows, Employed-NZDS respondents rated it as the sixth negative impact. Only a minority of respondents (13.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that they had to reduce time for study because of their work. Meanwhile, 33.5% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the time available for study was affected by their employment.

Table 17 Do not have enough time for study

	Strongly agree and agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree and disagree
Employed-NZDS (N=185)	13.5	22.2	16.2	14.6	33.5
Employed-CIS (N=48)	16.7	25	8.3	14.6	35.4

It remained the same for the Employed-CIS subgroup. 16.7% felt they had to reduce time for their academic studies because of work. However, far more respondents chose to disagree. 35.4% of Employed-CIS did not think they have to reduce their study time in order to work.

Have to miss a class sometimes in order to get to work on time

As shown in Table 18, 'have to miss a class sometimes in order to get to work on time' was strongly agreed to or agreed to by 12.9% of Employed-NZDS respondents. Nearly half of all Employed-NZDS respondents (49.7%) chose to disagree strongly, and another 5.9% 'somewhat disagreed'. It indicated that some students fulfilled their employment commitment at the expense of academic contact. However, missing classes was a situation only faced by a minority.

Table 18 Have to miss a class sometimes in order to get to work on time

	Strongly agree and agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree and disagree
Employed-NZDS (N=185)	12.9	18.4	13	5.9	49.8
Employed-CIS (N=48)	12.5	14.6	4.2	4.2	64.6

Employed-CIS respondents reported a similar proportion on the issue of missing classes. 12.5% agreed sometimes they had to give up a class in order to go to work. However, the majority (64.6%) did not miss classes because of their work.

Difficult to concentrate in class / suffer health problem

For Employed-NZDS respondents, the remaining two proposed negative impacts received less than 10% support. Table 19 and Table 20 provide the detailed percentages.

Table 19 Difficult to concentrate in class

	Strongly agree and agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree and disagree
Employed-NZDS (N=185)	6	14.1	18.9	12.4	48.6
Employed-CIS (N=48)	10.4	6.3	18.8	8.3	56.3

Table 20 Suffer health problems

	Strongly agree and agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree and disagree
Employed-NZDS (N=185)	3.3	7	11.4	9.2	69.2
Employed-CIS (N=48)	4.2	10.4	14.6	14.6	56.3

‘Difficult to concentrate in class’ and ‘suffer health problems’, respectively, received only 6% and 3.3% support from Employed-NZDS respondents. These low percentages indicated that only a very small number of respondents actually suffered from this. At the same time, 48.6% and 69.2% of Employed-NZDS respondents did not consider their

employment affected either their concentration on classes or personal health.

Employed-CIS respondents reported similar low scores on those two items as well. 10.4% agreed with the negative impact of 'difficult to concentrate in class' and only 4.2% agreed with 'suffer health problems'. Like their NZDS peers, 56.3% of Employed-CIS respondents did not experience these two proposed negative impacts.

To sum up, for all proposal statements of negative impacts, none of the associated *t* tests reached the significance level. Therefore, in terms of negative impacts of working, there was no significant difference between Employed-NZDS and-CIS respondents' perceptions.

Self-judged academic performance of the Employed subgroups

There were two questions to measure students' academic performance in the survey, one was an objective measurement, based on students' self-reported GPA and the other one was subjective measurement, based on students' self-judgement.

Unfortunately, the GPA question failed to obtain sufficient information from respondents. The reasons were possibly associated with the following three explanations. First, some respondents (i.e. foundation course and first year students) were unable to provide this figure. Secondly, some participants could not remember the exact figure at the

time of completing their questionnaires. Thirdly, despite the emphasis on confidentiality, some students were unwilling to provide such private information.

The self-judgement question received full responses from all respondents. Therefore, the following findings about *Employed* respondents' academic performance are based on their self-judged results alone.

As Figure 10 shows, nearly half of Employed-NZDS respondents (45.4%) considered that their academic performance was average, followed by just over a quarter (25.4%) who thought they were below the average. Another quarter (24.9%) rated their academic grades above the average level. A small minority (about 4%) of Employed-NZDS reported their results as excellent.

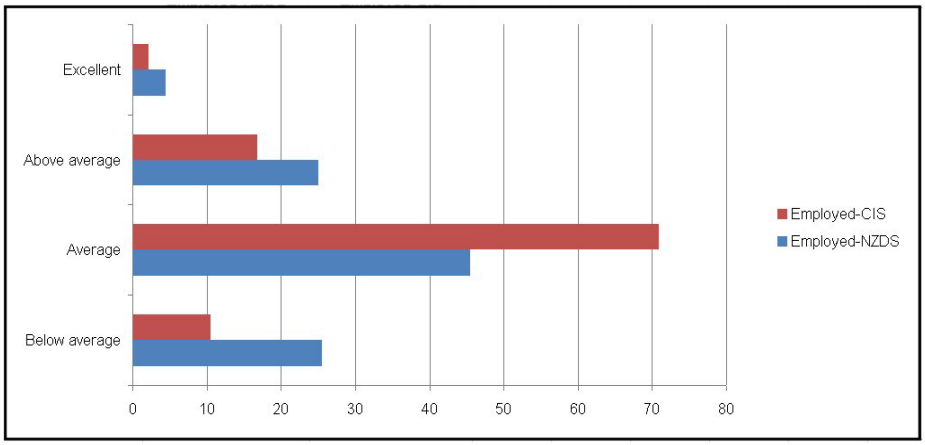

Figure 10 Self-judgement academic performance of the Employed

For Employed-CIS respondents, an overwhelming majority (70.8%) reported their academic performance was average. 16.7% considered they

were above the average level. Only 10.4% CIS respondents thought they were below average. Similarly to NZDS, a small minority (2.1%) rated their study performance as excellent.

Compared with their NZDS peers, a greater proportion of Employed-CIS respondents considered that their academic performance was about average level. A *t* test showed there was no significant difference in the means of self-judged academic performance by nationality (p=0.826). Therefore, for all employed respondents, there was no statistically significant difference by nationality of self-judged academic performance.

Intention of continuing or returning to work in the coming semester

Figure 11 shows future employment intentions of both Employed-NZDS and CIS respondents. The results indicated that compared to CIS, NZDS respondents were more likely to continue with their work or consider taking employment again in the future.

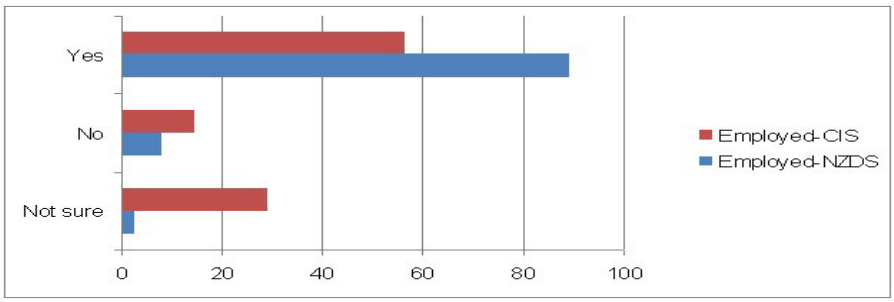

Figure 11 Intention of future employment: NZDS vs. CIS

Among Employed-NZDS respondents, most expressed their strong commitment to future employment. 89.2% of them answered ‘yes’ to the question of ‘will you continue working or consider restarting working’. A minority (8.1%) expected to quit their jobs in the coming semester, followed by 2.7% who said ‘not sure yet’. Overall, most of the Employed-NZDS respondents would continue to combine study and employment.

Employed-CIS respondents were less keen on future term time employment. 56.3% were reported they would continue or return to work in the coming semester. 14.6% would not work any more. Another 29.2% were not sure whether they would take term time employment in the coming semester. Compared to their NZDS peers, CIS were less likely to keep their current job or return to work in the future.

Summary of the findings from Employed subgroups

For all *employed* respondents, the motivation behind taking term time employment was different for the two nationalities. NZDS respondents were much more finance-driven, and CIS respondents valued the actual working experience much more, as well as the extra money to spend.

Both NZDS and CIS used similar methods to find jobs. Compared to their CIS peers, NZDS had much wider job seeking channels, especially through previous employment or work based social relationships.

As found in previous literature, retail and hospitality industries provided the biggest work opportunities for students. Over half of CIS were working in various restaurants and cafes. Apart from these common jobs, NZDS had a long list of occupations under the 'other' category.

Regardless of nationality, on average, employed respondents worked a week of moderate length. Compared to CIS, NZDS had higher wages, felt much more satisfied with their pay and generally speaking, worked for the same employer much longer. Notably, due to the fact that nearly half (89) of the 185 Employed-NZDS did not answer the wage-related questions, this finding was based only on the 96 responses.

Both NZDS and CIS respondents had supportive views of various positive impacts from term time employment. More specifically, CIS had a much stronger belief that working was beneficial to their overall university experience.

In terms of possible negative impacts of working, both NZDS and CIS respondents gave only limited support. They all noticed these at some level, especially regarding schedule conflicts with other activities. However, none of these negative impacts received majority support.

Specific results on self-judged academic performance did not reveal any significant difference between Employed-NZDS and -CIS. A greater proportion of CIS rated their grades as average than did Employed-NZDS.

Regarding future employment intentions, NZDS respondents were keener to keep working in the coming semester. Nearly one third of CIS respondents were reluctant to continue working.

Findings about Never-Employed subgroups

The findings are presented in the following order: the characteristics of respondents who chose not to work, the primary reasons for not working, the perceived impact on university experience, self-judged academic performance, and intention of starting work in the coming semester. Nationality-based similarities and differences are reported in individual sections.

Characteristics of respondents

Of 64 Never-Employed-NZDS respondents, 60.9% were male and 39.1% were female. It indicated that males were more likely than female NZDS respondents not to work while they were studying. Their age ranged from 18 to 39 years with a mean of 20.4 years. Only 3.1% of Never-Employed-NZDS respondents had one or more dependents to support while they were in university. Similar to the Employed-NZDS subgroup, most of Never-Employed-NZDS respondents (78.1%) had a student loan. The amount borrowed ranged from $1,000 to $40,000 with a mean of $13,732. This figure was not much different from the Employed-NZDS (the mean borrowing was $15,119). Table 21 shows the detailed information.

Table 21 Never-Employed-respondents overview by nationality

Demographic details		Never-Employed-NZDS (N=64)	Never-Employed-CIS (N=45)
Gender	Male	60.9%	48.9%
	Female	39.1%	51.1%
Age	Range	18-39y	18-39y
	Mean	20.4y	21.2y
Dependents	Yes	3.1%	2.2%
	No	96.9%	97.8%
Student loan	Yes	78.1%	0%
	Mean	$13,732	Nil
	No loan	21.9%	100%

Of 45 Never-Employed-CIS respondents, 48.9% were male and 51.1% were female students. The age ranged from 18 to 39 years with a mean of 21.2 years. The age range of CIS was very similar to the Never-Employed-NZDS subgroup. Only one respondent reported she had a dependent child to support, while the remaining Never-Employed-CIS respondents (97.8%) had no dependents. As mentioned earlier, no CIS respondents received a student loan from the New Zealand government.

For all Never-Employed respondents, by nationality, *t* test results showed that there were no significant differences of means in terms of age (p=0.232), gender distribution (p=0.216) or the respect of dependent responsibility (p=0.779). There was a statistically significant difference of study-related debt, i.e. student loans (p=0.00).

Reasons for not working

Based on the literature review, there were eleven proposed reasons listed in the questionnaire for the Never-Employed subgroup. Respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions by 7-point scale with 1 as 'strongly disagree' to 7 as 'strongly agree'. As with the Employed section, the percentages of *agree* and *strongly agree* were added together and referred as respondents considering it as their primary reason for not working.

Figure 12 shows the summary of reasons for NZDS and CIS who had never worked during the academic term time. For both Never-Employed NZDS and CIS respondents, there was only one reason which reached over 50% agreement: for NZDS this was academic-associated, and for CIS it was finance-associated.

For Never-Employed-NZDS respondents, academic concerns were the most important reasons for avoiding term time employment. 'Taking term-time jobs will affect my academic grades' had the highest proportion of support. 57.8% agreed that a potential negative impact on their academic performance was the primary reason behind their decision not to work.

For Never-Employed-CIS respondents, financial conditions were the most direct reason for not taking any term-time employment. 'My family provides sufficient financial support' had the greatest support of all

proposed reasons. 62.2% indicated that their families would cover all expenses while they were studying abroad.

Apart from the primary reason (impact on academic performance), for Never-Employed-NZDS, the 'agree' percentages for other reasons were listed as following: 'my academic workload is too heavy' (48.5%); 'my family provides sufficient financial support' (34.4%); 'I want to spend more time with family and friends' (28.1%); 'most jobs are poorly paid and not worth doing' (21.9%); 'I do not suffer any financial constraint' (21.9%); 'most term-time jobs will not help me for future employment' (21.8%); 'my parents do not want me to work while I am studying' (20.3%); 'I tried but cannot get a job' (17.2%); 'my parents do not allow me to work while I am studying' (3.1%); and 'I cannot work due to health-related issues' (1.6%).

For Never-Employed-CIS respondents, the 'agree' percentages of other reasons were listed as follows: 'taking term-time jobs will affect my academic grades' (35.6%); 'I want to spend more time with family and friends' (33.3%); 'I do not suffer any financial constraint' (33.3%); 'my parents do not want me to work while I am studying' (24.4%); 'My academic workload is too heavy' (22.2%); 'most term-time jobs will not help me for future employment' (20%); 'I tried but cannot get a job' (13.3%); 'most jobs are poorly paid and not worth doing' (11.1%); 'my

parents do not allow me to work while I am studying' (6.7%); and 'I cannot work due to health-related issues' (6.7%).

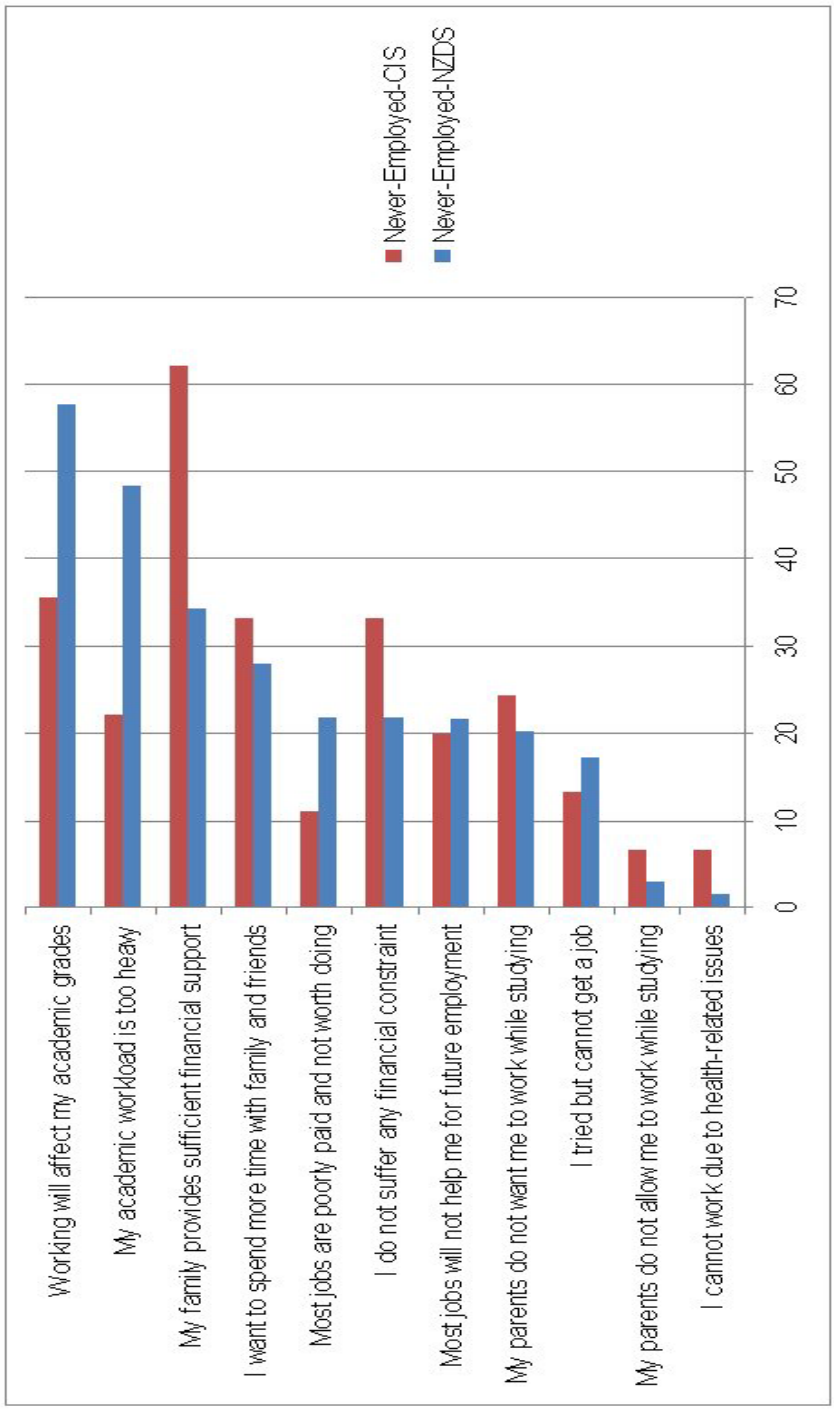

Figure 12 Reasons for not working: NZDS vs. CIS

Perceived impact on university experience

All respondents who had never worked were asked their opinions of the impact of not working on their overall university experience. For Never-Employed-NZDS respondents, 34.4% agreed that not working had a positive influence on their general university life. It was not a majority view. Of all Never-Employed-CIS respondents, this opinion had even less support, with only 17.8% agreeing that their general university life had benefited from not working. Meanwhile, of all Never-Employed respondents, 3.2% NZDS and 26.7% CIS disagreed with the proposal 'overall positive impact on their university experience' from not working.

A *t* test showed there was a significant difference of the mean on the 'perceived positive impact from not working' between Never-Employed-NZDS and -CIS respondents ($p = 0.001$). Compared to their NZDS peers, CIS had a more negative perception of not working.

To sum up, the responses from both Never-Employed NZDS and CIS respondents indicated that there was no strong feeling about the 'benefits of not working'.

Self-judged academic performance of Never-Employed subgroups

Figure 13 shows the self-judged academic performance results for Never-Employed-NZDS and CIS respondents. Most Never-Employed

respondents considered their academic achievement was reasonable or above average.

The detailed category listing was as follows: Only 17.2% of NZDS and 8.9% of CIS thought their academic results were below average. 35.9% of NZDS and 62.2% of CIS rated themselves as 'average'. For 40.6% of NZDS and 24.4% of CIS respondents, they reported their grades as above average. A minority of respondents considered they had excellent academic records; 6.3% of NZDS and 4.4% of CIS.

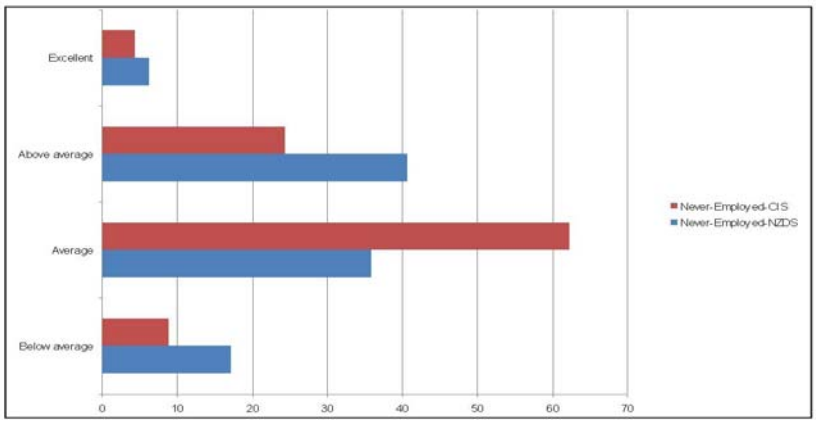

Figure 13 Self-judged academic performance of the Never-Employed

A *t test* showed there was no statistically significant difference between the mean of academic performance results by nationality (p=0.433)**.**

Intention of starting work in the coming semester

Never-Employed respondents were asked to indicate their future plans regarding term time employment. As Figure 14 shows, compared to their NZDS peers, CIS were keener to join the 'Employed' category.

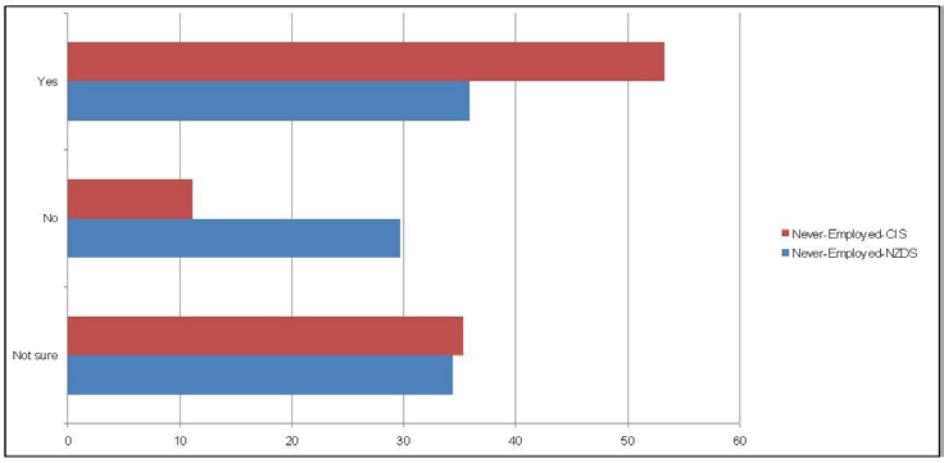

Figure 14 Intention of starting work: NZDS vs. CIS

Of 64 Never-Employed-NZDS respondents, their intention of starting work in the coming semester was almost evenly split into three categories. 35.9% reported they were currently seeking suitable jobs; 29.7% said they would not take any employment during academic term time. The remaining 34.4% were not sure about whether they would seek any work.

Of 45 Never-Employed-CIS respondents, over half (53.3%) were currently seeking employment. Only 11.1% of respondents confirmed they would not take any work in the coming semester. Like their NZDS peers, a similar proportion of Never-Employed-CIS (35.4%) chose 'not sure yet' about future term time employment.

Summary of findings from Never-Employed subgroups

The primary reason for not working was the most outstanding difference between Never-Employed-NZDS and -CIS respondents. NZDS respondents were most concerned about the potential negative impact on

their academic achievement. More than half of Never-Employed-NZDS respondents decided not to work because of this particular concern. For Never-Employed-CIS, it was more likely ‘not necessary’. Over 60% said their families would provide sufficient funding to cover all their expenses. Therefore, they did not need to work in order for extra financial resources.

Interestingly, another difference was associated with future employment intentions. Compared to Never-Employed-NZDS, CIS respondents reported a much higher percentage of seeking suitable employment in the coming semester. From ‘not necessary’ to ‘would like to’, it indicated there was some other potential reward from working, for example, the working experience itself (as found in the Employed-CIS group).

Conclusions

This section presented results of the data analysis. Based on total 342 respondents (i.e. 249 NZDS and 93 CIS), relevant research questions were answered as follows.

Regardless of whether or not they were working, NZDS respondents were more likely to have had employment during the academic term time. On the contrary, nearly half of CIS respondents had never worked.

For those who were working or used to work, finance was the primary reason for both NZDS and CIS. Additionally, almost 30% of CIS decided to work in order to gain some working experience.

The job search methods used by both NZDS and CIS revealed a great deal of similarity. Nevertheless, NZDS also reported less common ways of finding employment.

Regarding the nature of term time employment, the findings echoed the previous research, with students mainly working in service industries. Compared to their CIS peers, NZDS respondents reported a much broader range of occupations and received better wages. NZDS generally felt more satisfied with their pay and tended to work longer for the same employer than did CIS.

Overall, Employed-NZDS and CIS respondents reported similar attitudes towards the proposed impacts of working. Both responded supportively about the positive influences and resisted the negative aspects. More especially, NZDS considered that the improvement in financial status was the most beneficial impact of working. For CIS, the working experience was valued the most. For both NZDS and CIS respondents, schedule conflict with other activities was the most negative impact of working.

Regarding future employment plans, NZDS respondents were more likely to continue or return to work in the coming semester. Only half of CIS were similarly inclined.

For those who had never worked, concerns about the effect on academic grades were the most important reason for NZDS. CIS had a rather different rationale. Full funding support from families was the primary

reason for CIS to not work. There were no significant differences of self-judged academic performance between Never-Employed-NZDS and -CIS.

Compared to Never-Employed-NZDS, interestingly, CIS had a less positive view of the decision to not work. Over half of Never-Employed-CIS were currently seeking employment.

Based on these identified similarities and differences, the following section will discuss these findings and their relevant management implications.

Discussion

This section will discuss the major research findings about term-time employment of New Zealand Domestic and Chinese International students. It starts with the summary of identified similarities and differences between NZDS and CIS. Theoretical and managerial implications for multiple stakeholders are then presented. Finally, it outlines the limitations of this study and directions for future research.

Summary of findings

This section reviews the major findings from the previous chapter. In order to be consistent with the finding section, the discussion is presented in the following order: employment related choice; the decision to work; the decision to not work; and a summary of nationality-based similarities and differences.

An overview of respondents and their choices

The demographic characteristics of all respondents are accordance with findings from previous research in various countries (Carney *et al.*, 2005; McInnis, 2001; Morrison & Tang, 2002). Generally, most university students were single, in their early twenties and studying for their first undergraduate degree. Like other Western tertiary students, most of NZDS respondents (83.5%) had borrowed from the government to fund their study (i.e. a student loan). Notably, in recent years there have been a

growing number of adult students enrolling for further education (Manthei & Gilmore, 2005). There was a minority of students who were over 25 years (5.1%), with dependents (3.6%) and who normally had worked prior to going to university.

CIS respondents showed considerable homogeneity in terms of age and dependent responsibility as well as academic background. Most of them relied on family-sourced funding and only one mature-aged female respondent had a young child to support during her study. This fitted well with the typical Asian international student profile in the literature, as being a single young adult with full family support (Lee & Rice, 2007; Moreau & Leathwood, 2006).

Despite the similarity of demographic profiles, employment status revealed the greatest difference between NZDS and CIS respondents. Over 60% of NZDS were currently working and another 13.7% had worked during term time. CIS had a much lower percentage currently working (21.5%) or who used to work (30.1%). nearly half of CIS have never worked while studying. This figure is supported by Barron and Anastasiadou's study (2009), which reported that Indian international students, especially new arrivals, are most likely to not work during their first year of study. Almost 40% of CIS were first year students. This might explain the high percentage of Never-Employed-CIS, as they were

not yet familiar with the host country. Getting a job is not their first priority when they have just arrived in a foreign land.

In the next section, detailed discussions are presented for Employed and Never-Employed subgroups divided by respondents' nationalities.

The decision to work

This section discusses the research outcomes for both NZDS and CIS who were employed during term time. It discusses the reasons for working, job search methods, characteristics of employment and the perceived impacts of working.

Reasons for working

The motivation to work revealed a strong similarity between Employed-NZDS and -CIS respondents. Over 80% of Employed-NZDS and about 70% of Employed-CIS reported that their decisions were financially driven. These high percentages agree with previous studies in the UK and other Western countries (e.g. Broadbridge & Swanson, 2005; Ford et al., 1995; Lucas & Ralston, 1997). Taking part-time jobs has become a common trend for contemporary tertiary students in order to meet financial needs.

Previous studies have identified that there are two kinds of financial need: *essential* and *non-essential* need (Hodgson & Spours, 2001; Woodward, 2003). Under the current 'pay as you learn' policy, a significant

proportion of students face financial hardship and working becomes important and necessary (Barron, 2006). The present study found that 42% of Employed-NZDS and 29.2% of employed-CIS were working out of financial necessity. The relevant figure for NZDS also echoed those of a previous New Zealand study (Manthei & Gilmore, 2005). They investigated how students spend their term time employment earnings. Their questionnaire results indicated that basic living expenditures such as rent, food and transportation costs had the highest scores. Their work showed that the majority of New Zealand domestic students were working to meet their daily costs.

Almost equal proportions of Employed-NZDS (41.8%) and Employed-CIS (39.6%) chose to work for *non-essential* needs. Similar figures are reported in other studies (Ford *et al.*, 1995; Barke *et al.*, 2000). Peer pressure plays an important role in students' need for 'extra money'. The costs of expensive hobbies, holidays and other social activities (e.g. partying, drinking and smoking) have increased students' financial stress dramatically (Woodward, 2003). As revealed in the "personal comments" section in this study, both NZDS and CIS often feel they need to work to be able to afford social activities with friends.

Apart from the dominant financial reasons, Employed-CIS valued the work experience much more than their NZDS peers (27.1% vs. 7.1%). Curtis and Lucas (2001) found that students used their previous work

records to build up an attractive *curriculum vita* for future employment. Data from the present study indicated that Employed-NZDS did not value such experience as highly as other Western students (Lucas & Lammont, 1998). The reason could be that as a foreign student, any working experience was useful in some way (e.g. language and communication practice, getting familiar with Western society) for their future job search in the host country. These benefits are more meaningful for international students than domestic students.

Job search methods

To understand student term time employment fully, this study investigated how students actually find work. It appeared that Employed-NZDS and Employed-CIS used similar methods to get work. Social networking was the most common way to get recruited, followed by applying through job search websites and directly by door-knocking preferred employers. Various studies have confirmed the importance and usefulness of mature social networks (Furlong & Cartmel, 2005). Students from middle class backgrounds are likely to benefit from their well-established and useful relationships with others. For example, they are well informed or get positive recommendations to possible employers (Thomas & Jones, 2007). This is also the case in the present study, for both NZDS and CIS, ‘introduced by friends or family members’ was the most effective way to get a job.

NZDS also used various ‘non-traditional’ methods to find work, which CIS did not use at all. Most often, these methods would be typically ‘approached by previous employers or previous workmates’. Workplace social networking appeared as a very useful method to get new employment for NZDS. This partially explained why CIS, especially in their first year, found it difficult to find jobs. As new arrivals to the host country, they have not yet established a comprehensive social network, which would help them to find jobs. Unfortunately, there is not much available data from previous research to support further discussion of this specific issue.

Characteristics of term time employment

For all Employed respondents, their general employment pattern mirrors those features identified by previous literature (Broadbridge *et al.*, 2007; Ford *et al*., 1995; Smith & Taylor, 1997), which showed that retail and hospitality industries offer the most positions. Flexible working hours and low wages are typical of these industries. Most students’ work has very little relevance to their current academic study, while some students take more than one part-time job simultaneously. All these characteristics were identified by previous literature and found in the present study with both NZDS and CIS respondents.

Nevertheless, Employed-NZDS and -CIS revealed some interesting variations in terms of work titles, wages, service duration and opinions

about fair pay. Compared with CIS, NZDS had a much broader choice of occupations, generally better wages and longer service duration with the same employer. They also reported much higher satisfaction regarding the fairness of pay. In comparison, most CIS respondents (83.4%) were working in restaurants or the retail sector. In general, they worked slightly longer (13.4 hours/per week) than NZDS (13.2 hours/per week). Their average wages were much lower and their service duration with the same employer was less than half that of NZDS. Understandably, fewer CIS respondents felt happy about their pay. In summary, CIS seemed to be disadvantaged in several respects.

There is extremely limited literature to explain these differences based on nationality. Barron and Anastasiadou (2009) find that Polish students in UK tend to work much longer hours than others. They suggest that poor wages force international students to work longer in order to meet their financial needs. Lee and Rice (2007) also point out that international students commonly face various legal restrictions when seeking employment. Unfortunately, there is no further research evidence available to examine this issue.

Perceived positive and negative impacts of working

Academics agree that working during term time changes the traditional student university experience, both positively and negatively (Broadbridge &Swanson, 2005; Buie, 2001; Lucas, 1997; Silver & Silver,

1997; Winn & Stevensen, 1997). These identified impacts indicate that individual students may have very different perceptions regarding the 'good and bad' things about working while studying. In a nutshell, students have complex and rather mixed feelings about term time employment.

Indeed, the results of both NZDS and CIS in this study highlighted the enormous variety of experiences and perceptions regarding work. Certain outcomes showed quite dramatic contrasts between NZDS and CIS. Three interesting comparisons were drawn based on respondents' nationalities.

First contrast – individual impacts of working

There is a dramatic contrast related to individual impacts of working. Both NZDS and CIS strongly supported (reaching at least 50% agree or strongly agree) five out of seven proposed positive impacts (see previous chapter for detailed results). For NZDS, the tangible improvement in finances was the most positive benefit from working. This opinion corresponds with their primary reason for working as well as the results found by Broadbridge and Swanson (2005). They found that students felt finance-related stress reduced dramatically once they had a stable income source.

For CIS, gaining job experience was the most positive aspect of working. This finding corresponds with their second reason for working , which was also the finding of a Chinese study by Morrison and Tang (2002). They found that, generally, Chinese university students value their working experience. Furthermore, for CIS, their overseas work experience will improve their employability in China (He, 2007).

In contrast to their responses about positive impacts, both NZDS and CIS disagreed with all nine proposed negative impacts and none of them reached 50% agree or strongly agree (see previous chapter for detailed results). For both NZDS and CIS, the most recognizable negative impact was ‘schedule conflicts between working and other activities’ (respectively, 36.4% and 37.5%). This perception contradicts several earlier studies, in which researchers mostly emphasized the negative effects of working on academic grades (Callender & Kemp, 2000; Paton-Saltzberg & Lindsay, 1993; Sorensen & Winn, 1993). One possible explanation may be that working during academic term time has been integrated into the modern tertiary student lifestyle. For both domestic and international students, they may have become more confident with managing the double burden of study and employment. Satisfactory academic progress can be achieved with better time management. Therefore, current students do not consider their work commitments will affect their study seriously.

Another contradiction is related to employed students' physical and mental health. Small minorities of Employed-NZDS and CIS (3.3% and 4.2%, respectively) thought that they suffered physical health problems. A higher percentage was reported regarding feeling "stressed out": 24.3% of Employed-NZDS and 20.9% of CIS respondents reported they felt stressed because of their work.

These figures are much lower than revealed by some earlier studies (Fisher, 1994; Halamandaris & Power, 1997). For example, a previous Scottish study found that students who work long hours suffered significant mental and general problems with their well-being. The present findings revealed a changing trend in modern students that most of them are accustomed to *being busy.* Compared to early generations, they are much better prepared and know how to cope both physically and mentally. Therefore, a moderate number of respondents (under 25%) reported working had a negative impact on their health.

Second contrast - working intentions in the future

Another dramatic contrast is associated with the overall positive impact on students' university experience and the future working intentions of Employed-NZDS respondents. A high percentage (89.2%) intended continuing with or returning to work. Surprisingly, the score on 'the overall positive impact on your university experience' was quite low (25.4%). This contrast reflects the arguments by most UK academics who

believe that the majority of students are *forced* into term time employment (Hunt *et al.*, 2004; Johnstone, 2004; Moreau & Leathwood, 2006). They suggest that the numerical increase of Western students joining the short-term workforce is due to financial hardship. For example, in an earlier New Zealand study, Manthei and Gilmore (2005) found over half of students would not work if they had enough money to cover all their university expenses.

Third contrast - CIS's actual employment rate vs. intention of working

The third dramatic contrast is associated with the overall positive impact on students' university experience and the actual employment rate from the Employed-CIS respondents. Compared to their NZDS peers (74.3% including 60.6% currently working), only 51.6% of CIS respondents had term-time employment experience and only 21.5% were currently working at the time of the survey. CIS were much less inclined to be working while studying at university. Nevertheless, Employed-CIS rated the overall positive impact of working on their university experience much more highly (62.5%) than NZDS (25.4%).

The low employment rate of CIS may be explained by various nationality-related constraints, such as language ability, legal restrictions and cultural conflicts. Lee and Rice (2007) find the legal requirement of 'on-campus jobs only' in the United States makes it extra hard for international students to obtain any employment. A UK-based study

points out that new arrivals face various difficulties entering mainstream society due to language or culture shock (Moreau & Leathwood, 2006).

There is limited evidence to indicate why CIS are so positive about their term time employment. One possible explanation may be that Chinese students generally value work experience, as Tam and Morrison (2005) suggest in their Chinese study. Further, the 'foreign' context of their employment also adds a positive dimension. Working with locals provides international students with another channel to know the host country, enhancing their overall overseas experience (Curtis, 2007; Pickering & Watts, 2000).

Decision to not work

This section discusses the research outcomes for both NZDS and CIS who have never worked during term time. It discusses the reasons for not working, the perceived impact on their university experience and the intention of seeking possible employment in the future.

Reasons for not working

NZDS and CIS reported significantly different reasons for not working. NZDS were most worried about work affecting academic grades (57.8% gave this as the primary reason). CIS were more likely to decide not to work because they had the full financial support of their families (62.2% gave this as the primary reason).

Concerns about the possible negative impact on students' academic achievement were supported by many previous studies (e.g. Buie, 2001; Callender & Kemp, 2000; Hakim, 1998; Paton-Saltzberg & Lindsay, 1993; Robotham, 2009; Sorensen & Winn, 1993). For NZDS, the second most important reason was also academic-related with 48.5% thinking that their study was too intensive to consider working part-time. Those who had never worked strongly believed that combining study and employment would seriously affect their grades.

Interestingly, the score of 'affected academic grades' from the Employed-NZDS only obtained 16.8% support. It suggests that the perceived 'negative effect' is exaggerated by Never-Employed-NZDS (Sorensen & Winn, 1993). This opinion is supported by an Australian study (McInnis, 2001), where a majority of students consider there is no direct link between their academic success and their decision to work.

Full funding of their children's education is a common practice for most East Asian families (Mok, 2002; Yang, 2001). The results from Never-Employed CIS strongly support this. Therefore, CIS were more likely to not work because they did not suffer financial hardship, which was the primary reason for working given by Employed-NZDS.

Perceived impact on university experience

The decision not to work only achieved limited positive support from both Never-Employed-NZDS and -CIS respondents. Only 34.4% of

NZDS thought their overall university experience would benefit from not working. Far fewer CIS (17.8%) agreed with this opinion.

This finding contradicts previous studies, as most academics worry about the negative consequences of working in term time, from lower grades to missing real university life (Paton-Saltzberg & Lindsay, 1993; Taylor & Smith, 1998; Taylor *et al*., 1999). They believe that students will stop work if they can afford to do so. This difference is probably associated with a developing trend within the student population. Due to peer pressure or the desire for a particular lifestyle, working has become a part of 'real' university life for both domestic and international students (Woodward, 2003).

Intention of seeking possible employment

Never-Employed-CIS reported a much higher intention of seeking employment in the coming semester. Over half (53.3%) of CIS indicated that they were currently looking for work. NZDS perceptions were almost equally divided among yes (35.9%), no (29.7%) and not sure yet (34.4%).

Among Never-Employed respondents, CIS are much keener to join the student employee force in the future. For NZDS, financial hardship may force some students to enter the workforce despite their concerns about academic failure (Callender & Kemp, 2000; Robotham, 2009). For CIS, the desires to enjoy a 'holistic foreign life' and 'valuable work

experience' explain why they are willing to work (Lucas, 1997; Pickering & Watts, 2000).

Summary of nationality-based similarities and differences

Taking a comparative approach, this study aimed to explore empirically the nationality differences in student term time employment. The status of international students means various personal differences in terms of cultural diversity, language ability, financial condition, and establishment of social networks in the host country.

In this study, the identified similarities are:

- Primary reason of working (finance-driven, including both essential and non-essential needs)
- Job search methods (the principal method was introduction by friends or family members)
- Employment occupations (mainly in retail and hospitality)
- Weekly working hours (about 13 hours/ per week)
- General positive aspects of working from Employed subgroups
- General negative aspects of not working from Never-Employed subgroups

- Self-reported academic performance for both Employed and Never-Employed subgroups (No statistically significant difference between nationalities)

Identified differences are listed as follows:

- Working or not (NZDS had a much higher percentage working)
- Employment occupations (NZDS had a much wider choice of jobs)
- Job search methods (NZDS often used work-based networking, i.e. through previous jobs)
- Wage and perceived satisfaction with pay (NZDS had higher wage and felt more satisfied with their pay)
- Service duration with the same employer (NZDS tended to stay much longer)
- Intention to continue (return) to work for Employed subgroup (Employed-NZDS were more likely to continue or return to work)
- Reasons for not working (NZDS concerned about academic success; CIS had full funding from families)
- Intention of seeking employment for Never-Employed subgroup (Never-Employed-CIS had higher intention of doing so)

Data analysis revealed that NZDS and CIS encountered many differences in their employment. They also held diverse opinions regarding term time employment.

Theoretical contributions

Despite the growing academic focus upon student term time employment, to date no study has specifically considered the perceptions of the international student population. Taking a comparative approach, this study bridges the identified literature gap by investigating (at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch) New Zealand domestic students and the biggest foreign student group, Chinese international students.

The findings show that international students face different problems and challenges in addition to dealing with the double demands of study and work. Considering the growth of international student numbers in the tertiary education sector, further research is urgently needed to investigate the situation with Chinese and other nationalities.

Managerial implications

Based on the results of this study, it is possible to make several recommendations, especially considering the specific needs of international students. Hodgson and Spours (2001) suggest students who have low levels of confidence or lack social skills will benefit the most

from term time employment experience in the long-term (e.g. after graduation). Therefore, for individual students, it should encourage working to a *suitable extent* in terms of time and energy consumption. For both NZDS and CIS, it would be an especially valuable experience if they could strike the *right* balance between their work, study and the future career aspirations. The current dilemma is with defining *suitable extent* or *right balance*. For both groups of students, these questions may be beyond their self-management ability.

As education providers, universities (and even individual academics) should seriously consider strategies in order to meet contemporary tertiary students needs related to term time employment (Little, 2002). International students, especially freshmen, are more likely to be disadvantaged when dealing with foreign employers. This study revealed that the average hourly rate for CIS was 4% lower than the current minimum wage with 41.7% receiving less than the legal minimum. Given the current strongly growing international student population, the international student service agency (required by Immigration) should provide specific employment-related mentoring programmes and basic legal support services so that this sort of inequity can be overcome.

Considering both the political and economic significance of the education export industry, customer-orientated policies should be introduced in order to attract more and better international students. A study of

international students in the United States indicated that short-term and long-term employability has become an important element when overseas students choose prospective destinations abroad (Labi, 2010). A *safer and more supportive* student employment environment, especially for international students, could well provide a strong competitive advantage for the New Zealand education export industry.

Another issue is related to legal supervision and protection for all student employees. Hunt *et al*. (2004) state that the government needs to ensure students from all social backgrounds combine study and employment in a manageable manner. Certain legal supervisory controls should be imposed on employers who mainly use student employees (Barke *et al*., 2000) in order to protect students' legal rights. This suggestion is equally important for both domestic and international students, as this study revealed that a few NZDS and many more CIS were working for less than the legal minimum wage.

Limitations of this study

There are several limitations to this study, associated with the data collection method used. When interpreting the results, caution should be taken in terms of generalising and extending the findings to other student populations, especially to other nationalities, or students from other universities in New Zealand.

Firstly, it was unable to investigate the relationship between the choice of taking term time employment and students' actual academic grades. Direct access to university students' academic records was not possible due to privacy concerns. Relevant questions in the survey failed to obtain objective information about students' GPA, therefore it was not possible to make statistical comparisons by nationality and employment status. Like most previous research, this study relied on the self-judged academic performance information rather than actual students' GPA data to examine the potential impact on students' academic life,.

Further limitations also lay in the specific cultural relevance of the present study, as these findings could not be extended to international students from other countries. Chinese international students were chosen because of their significant numbers in the University of Canterbury as well as being the biggest foreign student group throughout the whole of New Zealand. The identified similarities and differences between NZDS and CIS cannot be extrapolated to another culture's international students.

Furthermore, those Chinese students who also have Permanent Resident status were omitted from the sample in this study. These Chinese students might react very differently from both targeted groups (i.e. NZDS and CIS), given their different personal backgrounds and residential status. They may well integrate with the host society with strong family support, or they might still face cultural or language barriers and struggle like

other international students. As they are neither domestic students nor typical international students, findings identified from this research are unlikely to reveal their opinions of student term time employment.

The research site also presented a geographic limitation. Given the size of Christchurch city, it has only a modest international student population. The same research may have had very different results if it had been conducted in other cities (e.g. Auckland, as the biggest city in New Zealand with the most Chinese immigrants). Chinese international students in Auckland may face very different financial pressures as well as employment opportunities. Therefore, the current findings cannot be simply applied to other Chinese international students in other universities.

These recognized limitations reveal the boundaries of this study. They also provide several possible directions for future research.

Directions for future research

Based on the findings of this study, there are several potential areas for future research into student term time employment. As stated in the research limitations section, the current questionnaire needs be modified to be more persuasive in getting students to divulge their GPA records. Future researchers should also consider obtaining authority from the university to access private information for academic study purposes.

This may enable future researchers to examine specific academic-associated impacts more objectively.

The Higher Education sector has become globalised in New Zealand and worldwide. This study took only Chinese international students as the target population. Given the specific Chinese cultural context, any findings identified cannot be simply extended to other nations. Therefore, future research should investigate other major international student populations (e.g. Indian, Japanese and Australian) in order to understand the international student employment issue fully.

Further, research locations can significantly influence the actual outcome of a study. Future research can be replicated in either smaller or bigger universities and cities, as well as within and outside of New Zealand. It can help to unveil the underlying impacts of how physical locations influence students' decision about employment while they study.

Student term time employment will continue to attract academic attention and the present study has shown that international students are a special population in relation to term time employment. More detailed research in this area is needed in order to understand the contemporary higher education sector and for the benefits to all stakeholders.

Conclusions

This research investigated tertiary student term time employment for both New Zealand domestic students (NZDS) and Chinese international students (CIS) at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand. It provides fresh empirical knowledge on contemporary student employment, particularly for international students.

Taking a comparative approach, this study has revealed the similarities and differences in the term time employment of CIS and NZDS in terms of choice, relevant rationales, characteristics of employment and perceived impacts of such choice. Compared to their CIS peers, NZDS are more likely to work, find suitable employment, get better pay, and stay longer in the same job. Financial hardship is the most important rationale for working for NZDS, while concern about the impact on academic performance is the primary reason for not working. Despite the generally positive feeling about working, most NZDS would choose not to work if they could afford not to.

Meanwhile, CIS show interesting differences from NZDS. Despite the identified disadvantages such as (often illegally) low wages and limited employment opportunities, many CIS respondents value their employment experience in the host country and indicate an increased

willingness to join the student workforce. For international students, working offers a unique opportunity to enhance their overseas life.

This study will be of value to various stakeholders. For individual students, there are plenty of challenges (e.g. finding jobs, schedule conflicts and low wages) revealed by this study on how to adapt to the new student lifestyle of working through the learning years. For education providers, necessary managerial strategies must be taken in order to offer appropriate advice and mentoring services to both domestic and international students in relation to term time employment, among other student issues. For policy makers (i.e. the government), this study offers a fresh angle on how to improve New Zealand competitiveness in the education export industry by providing a safer and more supportive international student employment environment.

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Appendices

Questionnaire information sheet

This research is conducted through the Department of Management, University of Canterbury. It has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee.

You are invited to participate in the research project- Tertiary student term-time employment: A comparison study of New Zealand domestic and Chinese international students. Participation involves answering a brief questionnaire, which will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

You must be at least 18 years old to participate in this research project. You must be either a New Zealand citizen or Chinese international student (i.e. holding a valid international student visa) to participate this research. A Chinese student who holds the New Zealand permanent resident visa is excluded from this research.

The aim of the project is to investigate the nature and characteristics of university domestic students and Chinese international students' term-time employment at the University of Canterbury; and further to identify the differences between these two student-populations in terms of term-time employment characteristic, motivation of working, perceived impacts on their overall university experiences.

The questionnaire is anonymous, and you will not be individually identified as a participant at any stage. You may withdraw your participation, including withdrawal of any information you have provided,

until your questionnaire has been added to the others collected. Because it is anonymous, it cannot be retrieved after that.

You are welcome to provide your email and contact details at the end of the questionnaire. This information will be only used for recruiting interviewee purpose. A semi-structured interview may be conducted at the later stage of this research. A separate information sheet and consent form will be given when you are invited to participant the interview.

The final Masters thesis will be accessed via the UC library database for all UC library users. The results of the present study may be published, and you will be offered a summary of results. By completing the questionnaire it will be understood that you have consented to participate in the project, and that you consent to publication of the results of the project with the understanding that anonymity will be preserved.

The present study is being carried out as a requirement for a Master of Commerce degree by Xiaofeng Wang under the supervision of Dr. Clare Lange. The researcher and her supervisor can be contacted at 03-3642987 ext 3621, or xwa42@uclive.ac.nz. They will be pleased to discuss any concerns you may have about participation in this project.

Questionnaire for Employed

As a thank you for taking part in this survey, Five $50 Westfield Vouchers will be randomly drawn and awarded to lucky participants!

To enter this draw, please write your student ID: _____

Section One: Demographic information

1. What is your age? _____years

2. What is your gender? □ Male □ Female

3. What is your nationality?

□ New Zealander

□ Chinese, I do not hold Permanent Resident visa.

I come from:- □ Mainland; □ Hong Kong; □ Macau.

4. Do you have any dependents to support? (i.e. young children or elderly parents)

□ Yes, (please specify number of dependents:_____) □ No

5. Do you have a student loan?

□ Yes, (please specify amount $_____) □ No

6. Do you work during term-time?

□ Yes, I am employed currently.

□ I have worked before but am not currently working.

□ No, I have never worked during term-time.

Section Two: term time employment information

1. What kind of job do you currently hold or used to have? (Multiple choices)

□ Retail sales assistant □ Supermarket checkout operator

□ Restaurant / Café / Bar staff □ Office administrator

□ Hotel reception / general staff □ Cleaner

□ Labourer □ Other (please specify):_____

2. On average, how many hours do / did you work per week during the term time?

_____ hours / per week

3. What is (was) your hourly rate? (your current or last job)
   $_____/ per hour
4. Do (did) you feel satisfied with your wage?
   - □ Yes, I think it is fair.
   - □ It is ok, everyone gets similar pay.
   - □ No, it is too low. But I have to take it otherwise I will have no job.
5. How long have you worked for the current (or your previous) employer? _____Months
6. How did you get your current or the previous job (s)? (Multiple choices)
   - □ Applied through job searching websites
   - □ Door-knocking on preferred employers
   - □ Introduced by friends or family members
   - □ Applied through in newspaper advertisement
   - □ Family business
   - □ Other (please specify):_____
7. What is / was your principle reason for taking paid employment while studying? (Single choice)
   - □ Paying back student loan
   - □ Extra cash to spend
   - □ Meeting living cost
   - □ Gaining work experience
   - □ Making more friends
   - □ Other (please specify):_____
8. Do you plan to continue working or return to work in the coming semester?
   - □ Yes
   - □ No
   - □ Not sure yet

Section Three: The perceived impacts of taking term time jobs

Please indicate your opinions on the following statements by using the 7-point scale.

By taking a term time job during term-time, I believe that…

1. It helps / helped me to gain job experience.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

2. It helps / helped me to improve my financial status.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

3. It improves / improved my time management ability.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

4. It helps / helped me to improve my interpersonal skills.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

5. It helps / helped to identify my future employment interest.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

6. It increases / increased my confidence in the real workplace.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

7. It helps / helped to enhance my employability.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

8. Overall, it has / had positive impacts on my university experience.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

9. It has / had adversely affected my academic grades / performance.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

10. Sometimes, I have to miss a class session in order to get work on time.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

11. I feel / felt it is difficult to concentrate in class because of my term timejob(s).

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

12. I could not get enough rest because of taking term timejob(s) while studying.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

13. I do / did not have enough time for study.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

14. Sometimes I have / had schedule conflicts between working and other activities.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

15. I do / did not have enough time for socializing with my family or friends.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

16. I suffer / suffered health problem due to my term time job(s).

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

17. Sometimes, I feel / felt stress out due to my term time job(s).

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

18. Overall, it has / had negative impacts on my university experience.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

Section Four: Academic workload information

1. I am studying towards a degree of _____in _____Major.
2. I am currently in my:

   □ first □ second

   □ third year □ Other (please specify):_____

3. On average, my academic workload (lectures and tutorial sessions) is _____hours / per week.
4. My last year academic GPA was _____. (This information will remain strictly confidential).
5. I believe my academic performance is:-

   □ Below average □ Average

   □ Above average □ Excellent

Section Six: Personal Comments

Please leave your personal comments about this topic.

Questionnaire for Never-Employed

Section One: Demographic information

1. What is your age? _____years

2. What is your gender? □ Male □ Female

3. What is your nationality?

□ New Zealander

□ Chinese, I do not hold Permanent Resident visa.

I come from:- □ Mainland; □ Hong Kong; □ Macau.

4. Do you have any dependents to support? (i.e. young children or elderly parents)

□ Yes, (please specify number of dependents:_____) □ No

5. Do you have a student loan?

□ Yes, (please specify amount $_____) □ No

6. Do you work during term-time?

□ Yes, I am employed currently.

□ I have worked before but am not currently working.

□ No, I have never worked during term-time.

Section Two: The reasons for NOT taking term time employment

Please indicate your opinions on the following statements by using the 7-point scale.

I have never worked during term time, because…

1. I do not suffer any financial constraint while studying at university.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

2. My family provides me sufficient financial support while I am studying.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

3. My parents do not want me to work while I am studying.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

4. My parents do not allow me to work while I am studying.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

5. I tried but cannot get any jobs.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

6. My academic workload is too heavy for me to take any term time jobs.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

7. I want to get good academic attainment and term time jobs will affect on my grades.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

8. I have health-related issues which make it difficult for me to work while I am studying.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

9. I want to spend more time with my family and friends.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

10. Most term time jobs are poorly paid and not worth doing.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

11. Most term time jobs will not help me to get employment once I finish my degree.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

12. Overall, I believe not taking term time jobs has a positive impact on my university experience.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

13. Will you consider working during term time in the coming semester?

□ Yes

□ No

□ Not sure yet

Section Three: Academic workload information

1. I am studying towards a degree of _____in _____Major.

2. I am currently in my:

□ First □ Second

□ Third year □ Other (please specify):_____

3. On average, my academic workload (lectures and tutorial sessions) is _____hours / per week.

4. My last year academic GPA was _____. (This information will remain strictly confidential).

5. I believe my academic performance is:-

□ Below average □ Average

□ Above average □ Excellent

Section Four: Personal Comments

Please leave your personal comments about this topic.